SHINSHOKU KISS

2

KAZUKO HIGASHIYAMA

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KISS

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2

TOKYOPOP

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Yuta

Takuto

Story So Far

When the mysterious and widely popular doll maker "Tool" took Kotoko on as an assistant, he also awakened the ability within her to manifest a vinelike "encroacher"—a eerie plant that extracts people's attractive qualities from them with a kiss. Tool, whose real name is Yuta, forces Kotoko to work as his assistant and make male dolls for him with the encroacher he's planted in her. He threatens to age Kotoko to the point of wizened death if she doesn't comply with his orders, unfairly abusing his power to control time. Mysterious as Yuta's abilities is a Tool Doll called Star, who's driven him mad and who Kotoko's awfully determined to find

Kotoko

Kazuhiro Higashiyama

SHINSHOKU KISS

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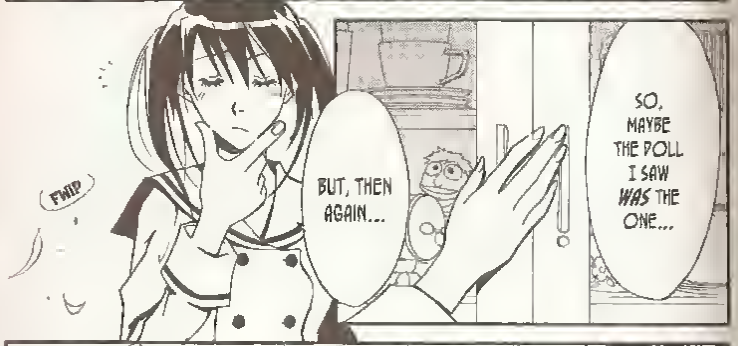
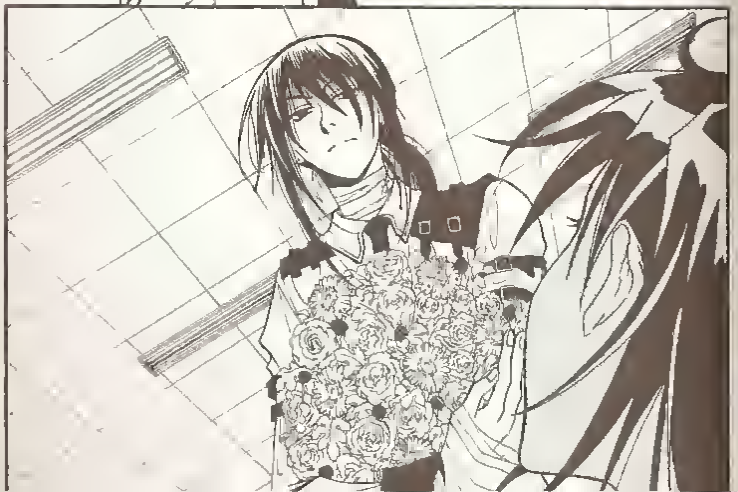




Story 3 Wheel of Fortune [Part 1]

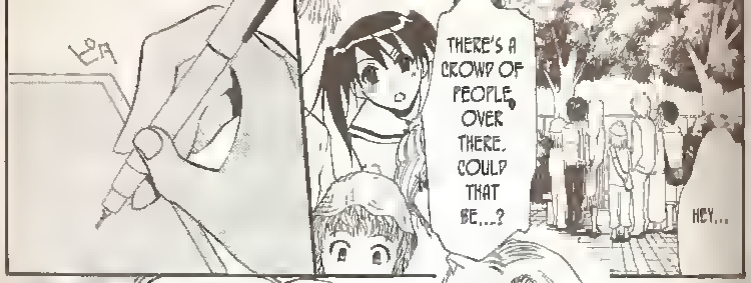
SQUEE!!
I GUESS THE SEARCH FOR STAR CAN WAIT.
I DON'T MIND, 'CAUSE I ACTUALLY LIKE PETTING HIM.
AFTER OUR "INCIDENT," TAKUTO-SAN MAKES ME PET HIS HEAD RANDOMLY.
なでなで
なでなで
ほわ

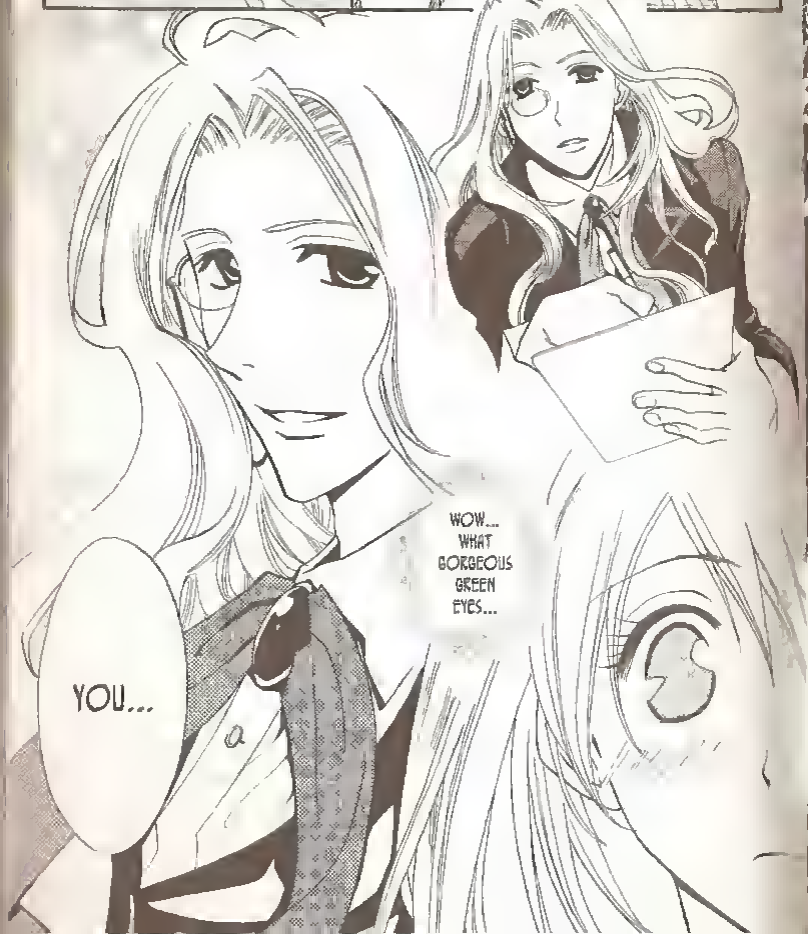
I-I'M SORRY !!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE ANY TROUBLE!
I WAS JUST LOOKING FOR THE REAL STAR!
KYAAAAA!!

Crash
ARE YOU OKAY, YUTA-SAN?!
IT'S NOT LIKE YUTA-SAN TO MAKE MISTAKES. HE'S TOO MUCH OF A PERFECTIONIST.
I THINK YOU'RE EXHAUSTED.
MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO REST A LITTLE.
NO TIME FOR REST.

YOUR JOB IS TO MAKE MALE DOLLS...
...NOT TO FLIRT ALL DAY WITH YOUR CO-WORKERS, GET IT?
I'M NOT TAKING ANYTHING OUT ON YOU--
BAMF
I--
I WASN'T FLIRTING!!
WAS NOT!! DON'T TAKE YOUR FRUSTRATIONS OUT ON ME JUST 'CAUSE YOUR GALLERY OPENING'S COMING UP!
YOU WERE.

I'M COUNTING ON YOU, KOTOKO.
GYAAA!!
Street Post
WHY, YOU...!!
I WON'T BE SATISFIED 'TIL YOU PIN DOWN THIS GUY.
SLAM
HE REALLY IS TAKING ALL HIS FRUSTRATIONS OUT ON ME!!
I'M COUNTING ON YOU, KOTOKO...
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU COME UP WITH FOR YOUR NEW MALE DOLL.
I'M NEVER RANDOM! MY WORK IS TOO IMPORTANT.
YOU JUST PICKED SOME GUY OUT AT RANDOM, DIDN'T YOU?!
LIAR!!
DID FOOL JUST PAY ME A COMPLIMENT? OH WOW, I'M BLUSHING...
OH AND THIS GUY HERE IS YOUR MODEL.

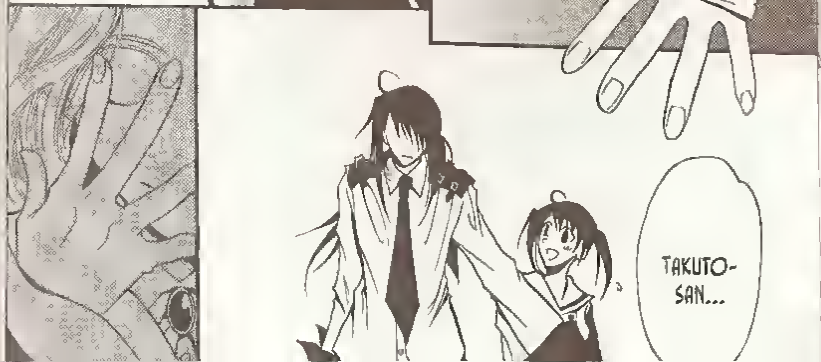

THERE'S A CROWD OF PEOPLE OVER THERE. COULD THAT BE...?
HEY...


WOW... WHAT GORGEOUS GREEN EYES...
YOU...

THIS ISN'T GOOD...

"KENTA EZAKI."
HE'S A STREET POET?!
IT'S SO COOL HOW THEY CAN WRITE POEMS ON THE SPOT AND SELL THEM JUST LIKE THAT.
WHAT?! SO HE WORKS AT THIS PARK-- AND THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT TO GO ON?!
AND THIS ARTICLE'S TWO YEARS OLD?!!
Poet Kenta Ezaki

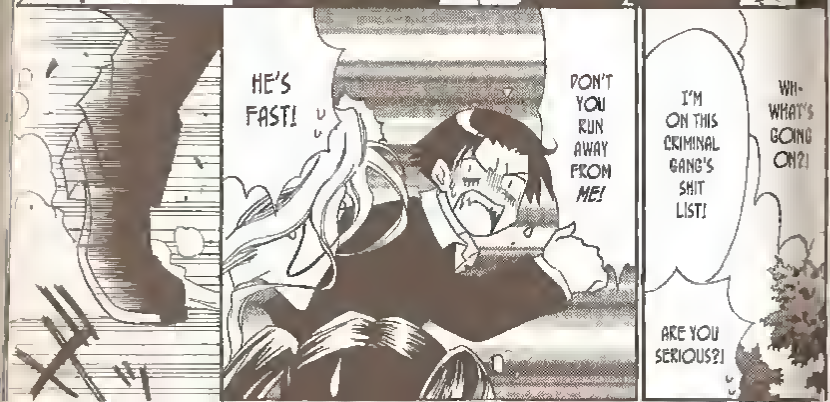
THEY KNOW EACH OTHER?!

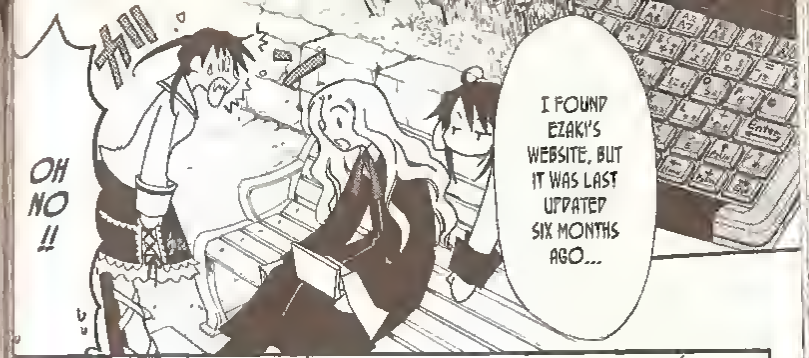


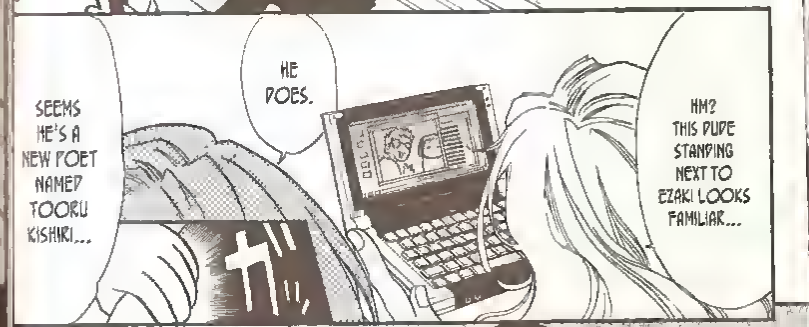
HE'S ACTING KINDA STRANGE, ISN'T HE?
LIKE HE'S SLEEPING MORE. OR HE'S GETTING CLUMSIER...
HAVE YOU NOTICED MORE OF THAT HAPPENING?
I JUST THINK HE'S EXHAUSTED FROM TOO MUCH WORK THESE PAST FEW DAYS...
I SUPPOSE THE MOMENT HE SAID HE WAS YUTA-SAN'S FRIEND WAS WHEN I MARKED HIM OFF AS A WEIRDO.
...IS REALLY SETTING OFF MY ALARM BELLS!
WE'RE TRYING TO FIND SOMEBODY... MAYBE YOU'VE SEEN HIM AROUND? HIS NAME'S KENTA EZAKI.
I'M GOING OVER TO YUTA'S PLACE RIGHT NOW. HOW ABOUT YOU GUYS?
I MEAN, WHO KNOWS WHAT WEIRD THINGS YUTA-SAN SAID ABOUT ME?
BY THE WAY, HOW ARE THINGS WITH YUTA?
?
NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM.
A POET, HUH?

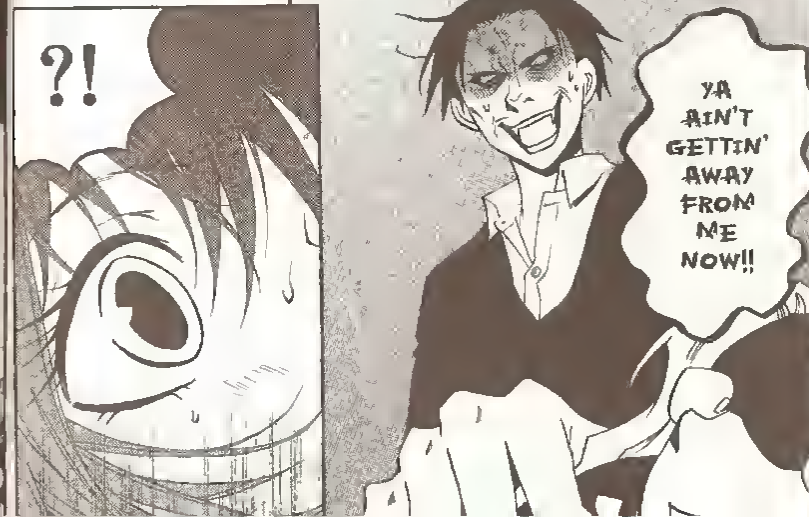
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT YUTA-SAN IS ILL.
!
WA-WHAT IS IT?! YOU SCARED ME.
I'M SORRY TO HAVE WORRIED YOU.
WELL, I WASN'T...
REALLY?
THE EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE TELLS ME YOU'RE SINCERELY CONCERNED ABOUT YUTA.
I'LL LOOK FOR THIS POET DUDE WITH YOU.
THAT WAY, WE CAN FIND HIM FASTER, AND GET BACK TO YUTA THAT MUCH SOONER.
.....
THANK YOU SO MUCH.

RUN, TAKUTOU
EXCUSE ME?!


HE'S FAST!
DON'T YOU RUN AWAY FROM ME!
I'M ON THIS CRIMINAL GANG'S SHIT LIST!
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
WH-WHAT'S GOING ON?!


I FOUND EZAKI'S WEBSITE, BUT IT WAS LAST UPDATED SIX MONTHS AGO...
OH NO !!

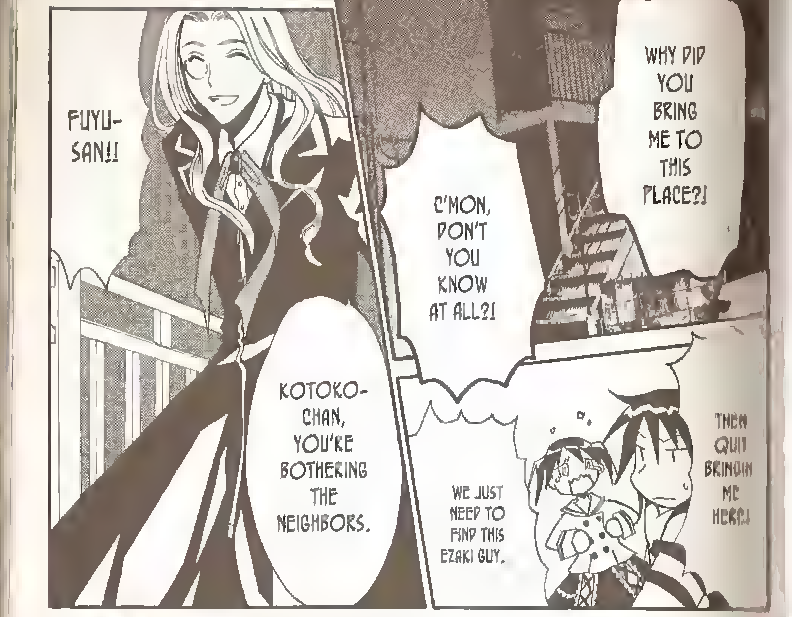

HM? THIS PUPE STANDING NEXT TO EZAKI LOOKS FAMILIAR...
HE DOES.
SEEMS HE'S A NEW POET NAMED TOORU KISHIRI...

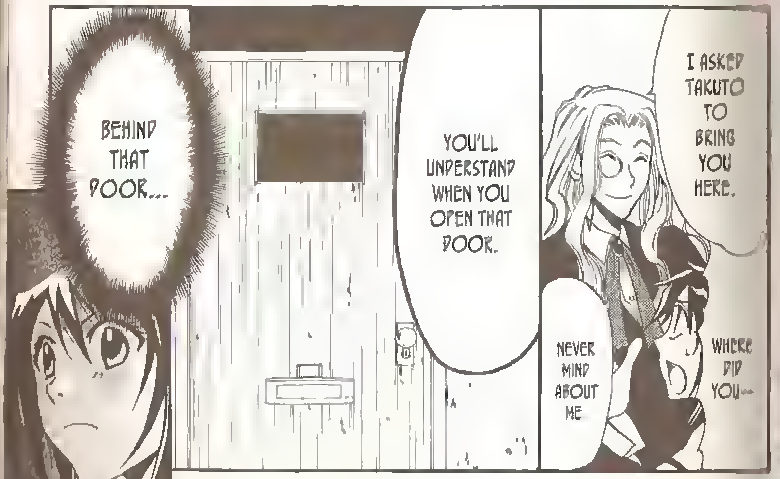

?!
YA AIN'T GETTIN' AWAY FROM ME NOW!!

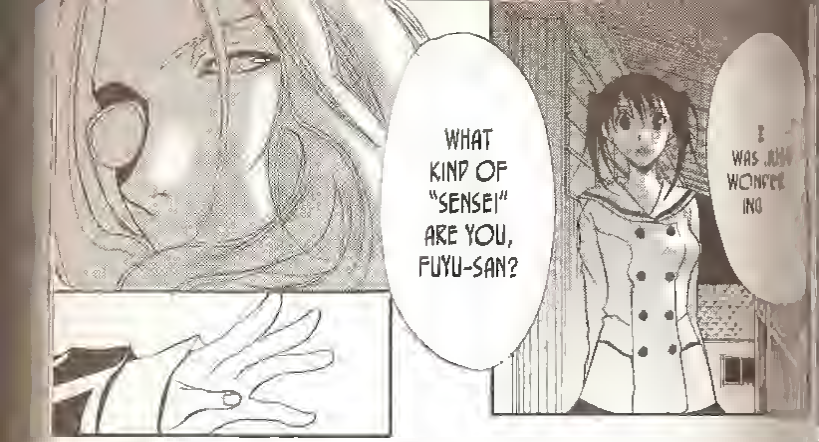
FOR ONE SECOND...
IF YOU WOULD KINDLY EXCUSE US...!
...I THOUGHT WE WERE FLYING LIKE BIRDS.
HE DOESN'T KNOW WHEN TO GIVE UP!
WAIT, YOU!
TAKUTO.
PASS IT ON!
GYA!!
"SENSEI"?
SENSEI, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO RELEASE YOUR NEXT BOOK?!

Sensei An honorific placed after the names of teachers,

WHAT A LARGE BIRD...
OH... MY...


FUYU-SAN!!
KOTOKO-CHAN, YOU'RE BOTHERING THE NEIGHBORS.
C'MON, DON'T YOU KNOW AT ALL?!
WHY DID YOU BRING ME TO THIS PLACE?!
WE JUST NEED TO FIND THIS EZAKI GUY.
THEN QUIT BRINGIN ME HERE!

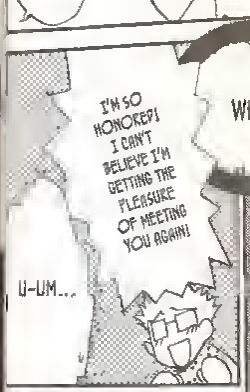

BEHIND THAT DOOR...
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU OPEN THAT DOOR.
I ASKED TAKUTO TO BRING YOU HERE.
NEVER MIND ABOUT ME
WHERE DID YOU--

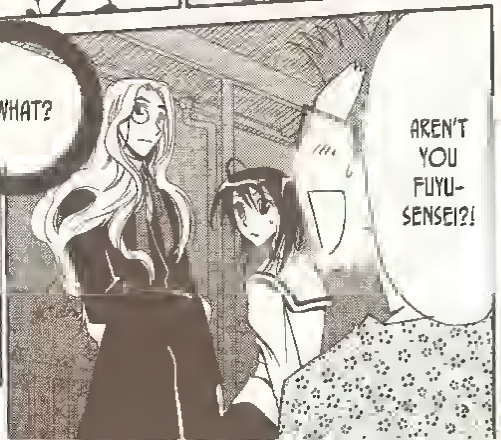

WHAT KIND OF "SENSEI" ARE YOU, FUYU-SAN?
I WAS JUST WONDERING

THAT EZAKI GUY'S INSIDE...?
DDDDD

HUH?
THIS IS JUST POINTLESS I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE TRUSTED THAT FUYU

UM... CAN I HELP YOU?
SHOWS WHAT I KNOW! THIS IS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT GUY!


U-UM...
I'M SO HONORED! I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GETTING THE PLEASURE OF MEETING YOU AGAIN!

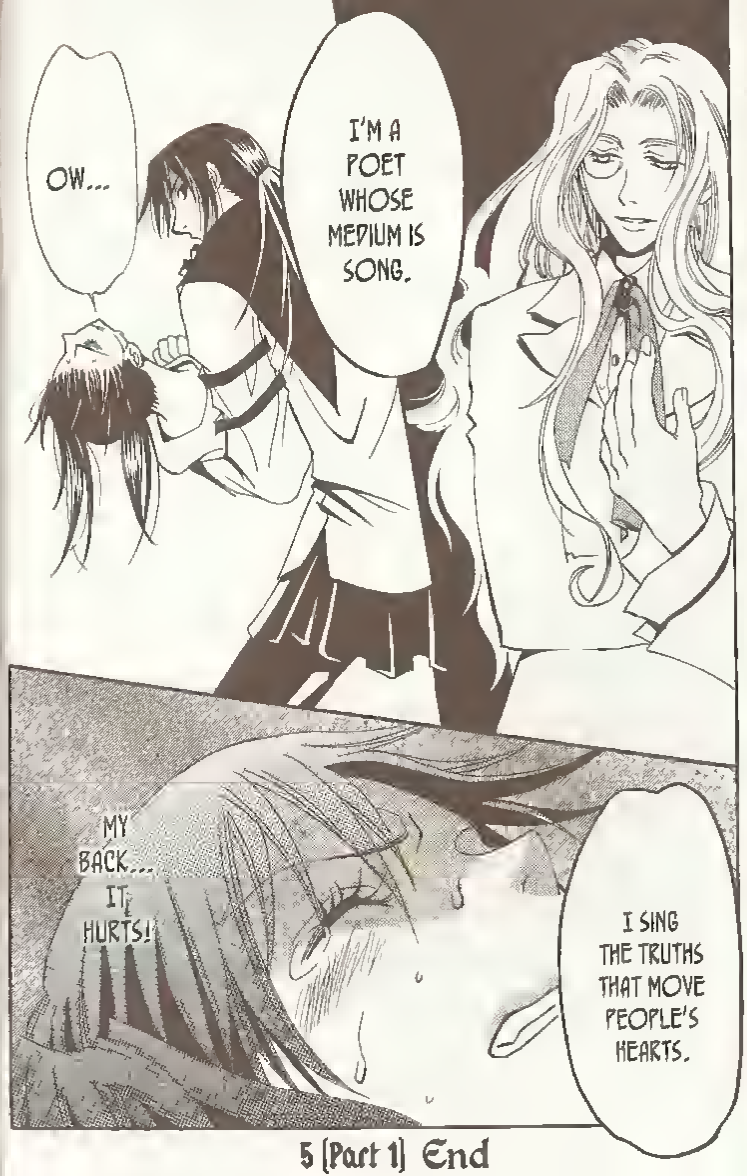

WHAT?
AREN'T YOU FUYU-SENSEI?!

...A WAVE OF BLUE WIND DRIFTS AWAY.
FOR ONE WHO LIVES IN THE HEAVENS...
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HEARING ONE OF FUYU-SENSEI'S POEMS!
WHAT?

BOUND BY VIRGIN LIPS...
...AND BELOVED BY TIME.

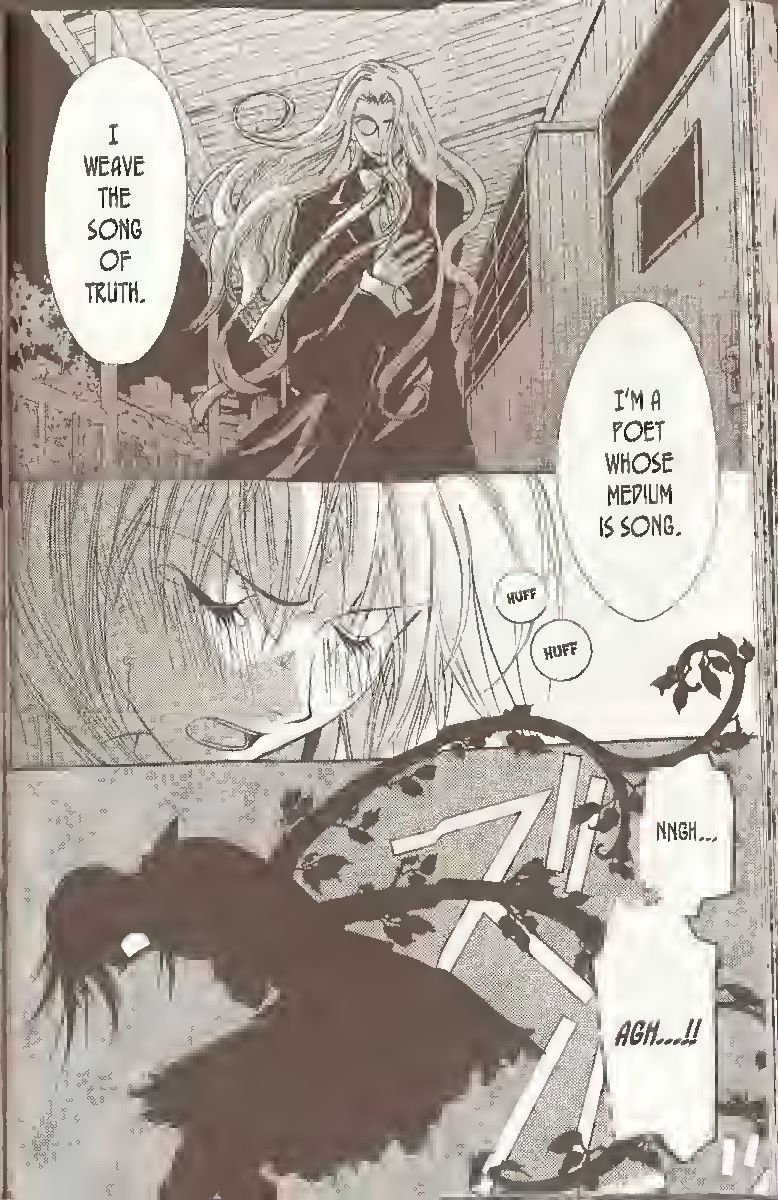
BLOOMING CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
PURE WHITE FEATHERS.
?!
GREEN WIND.
OW...

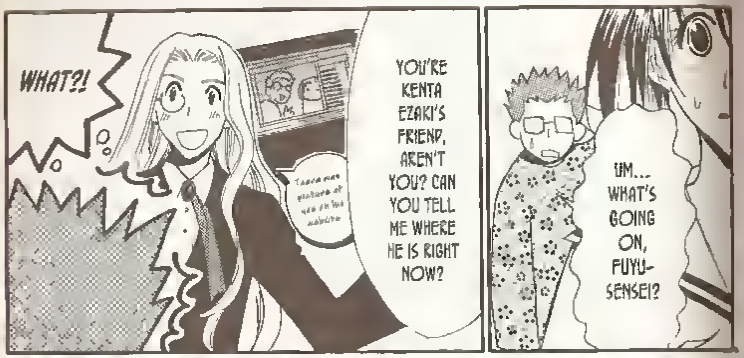
Story 5
Wheel of
Fortune
[part 2]


OW...
I'M A POET WHOSE MEDIUM IS SONG.
MY BACK... IT HURTS!
I SING THE TRUTHS THAT MOVE PEOPLE'S HEARTS.

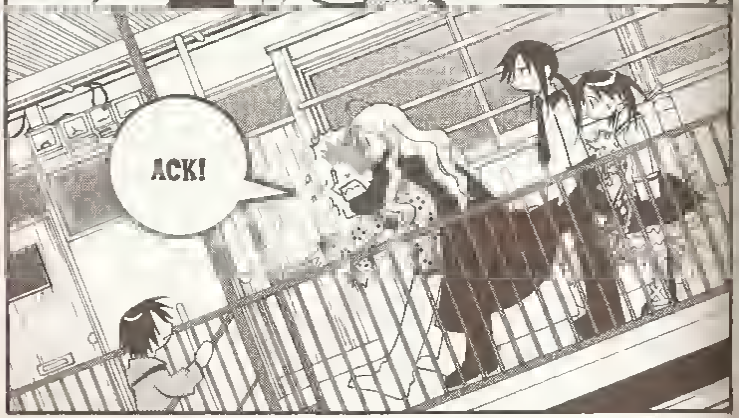
5 [Part 1] End

CALM DOWN...
HUFF
THE PAIN... IT'S GOING AWAY.
AH...
TAKU-TO.

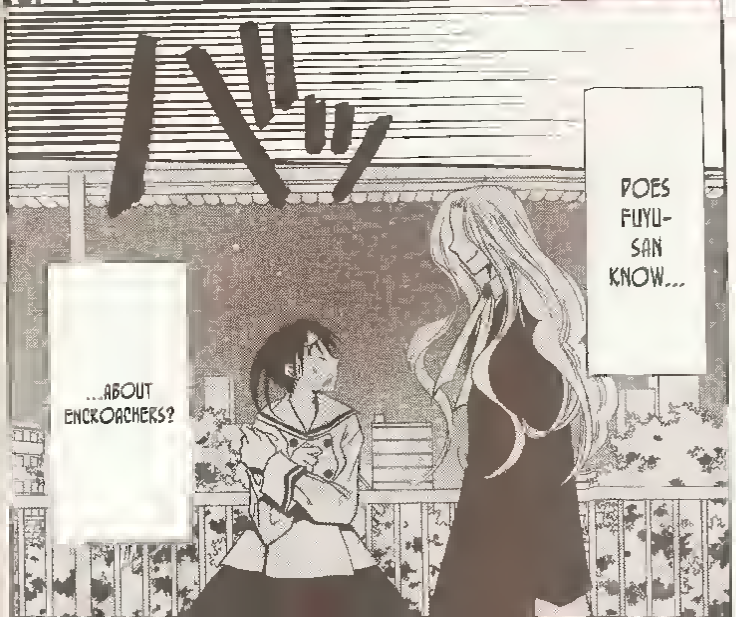

I WEAVE THE SONG OF TRUTH.
I'M A POET WHOSE MEDIUM IS SONG.
HUFF
HUFF
NNGH...
AGH...!!


WHAT?!
YOU'RE KENTA EZAKI'S FRIEND, AREN'T YOU? CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE HE IS RIGHT NOW?
UM... WHAT'S GOING ON, FUYU-SENSEI?

NO CLUE!! YOU CAN'T COAX OUT OF ME WHAT I DON'T KNOW!!
C'MON, TELL ME! WHAT'S THE NEAREST STATION TO HIS HOUSE?
I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST!
I-I-I-I...
OH, YOU DEFINITELY KNOW.♡


ACK!

IT'S TAKEN ROOT...
...AND GROWS INSIDE THIS GIRL SPLENDIDLY.
.....


DOES FUYU-SAN KNOW...
...ABOUT ENCROACHERS?

TO BE HONEST, HE DOESN'T MATTER IN THE LEAST.
NO...
AHHHH!
I CAN'T MAKE A DOLL UNLESS I EXTRACT THE ESSENCE OF HIS BEAUTY.
AND I HAVEN'T EVEN HAD A SINGLE CONVERSATION WITH HIM YET.
huff
huff
O-OH NO... WE LOST HIM.

KENTA EZAKI!!
Eek!
OKAY!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. GO AFTER HIM.
H-HEY! WAIT UP! WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY?!
Gasp!
HEY, YOU...!
DID HE DO SOMETHING TO YOU?!
FUYU-SENSEI!

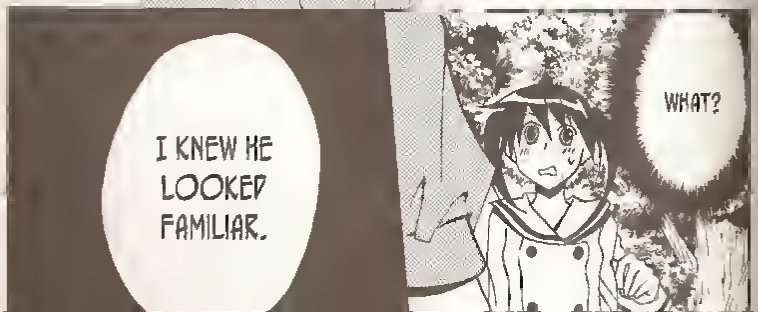
Nah!
HE...
KYA!
HE'S SO COOL! I'M IMPRESSED, TAKUTO-SAN!
"PET ME" SIGN
THEN AGAIN, MAYBE NOT.

WHAT'S WITH THIS BIRD?!
OH! THERE HE IS!
HUH?
ISN'T THAT THE SAME BIRD...?
ACK!

YOU MEANIE!
A-ARE YOU OKAY?!
?!
KWA!

RIP
RIP
I GUESS HE HATES POLLS, BUT I NEED TO PERSUADE HIM.
I AM AN EMPLOYEE OF A REAL COMPANY...

YOU WORK FOR FOOL?!
YOU PEOPLE...!

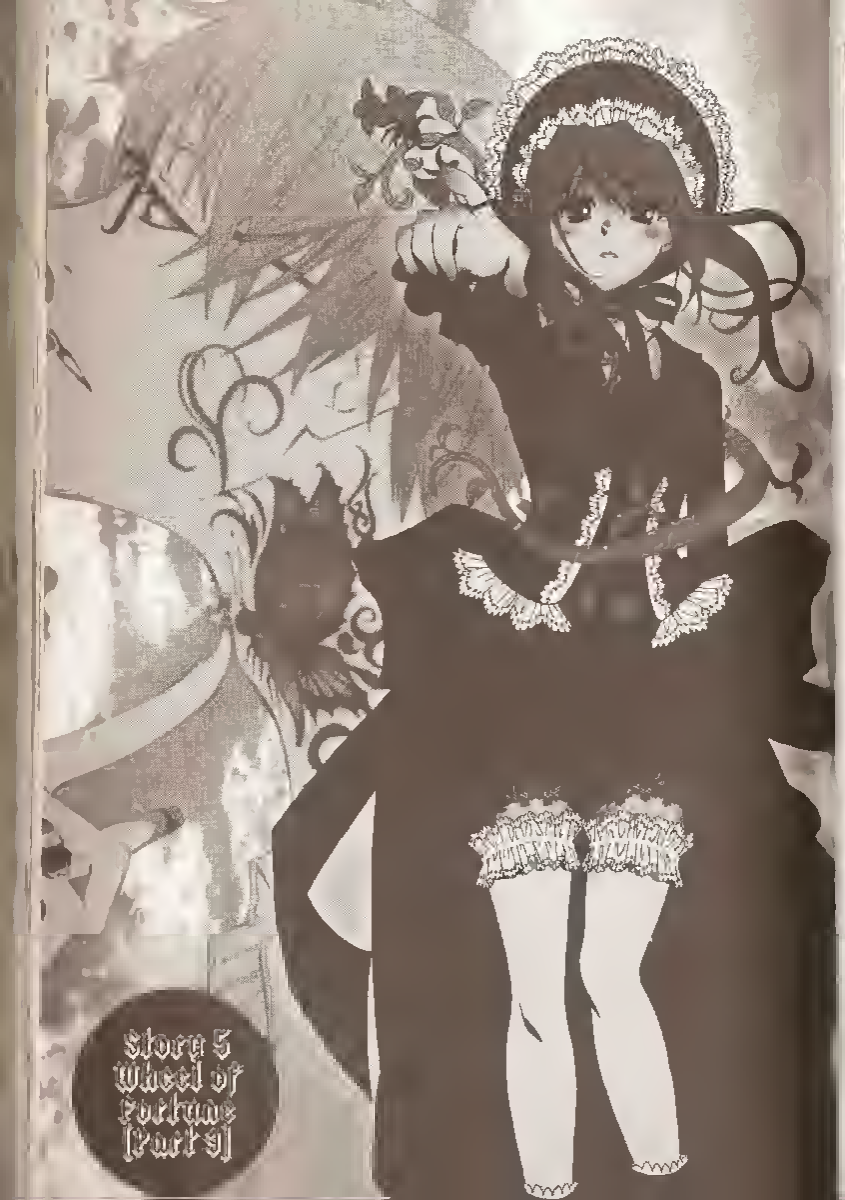

I KNEW HE LOOKED FAMILIAR.
WHAT?

HEH
YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE THANKING ME.
KII
YOU SCARED ME. WHAT'S WRONG?
KII
HE?
WHAT A SILLY BIRD.

SHEESH, I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE COLLECTIONS AGENT OR SOMETHING.
YOU WANT ME TO BE A MODEL FOR YOUR POLL?
FORGET IT! THAT'S WAY CREEPY!

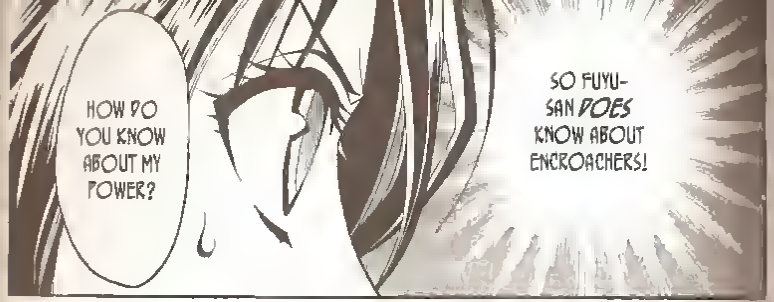
A DOLL HAD THE POWER TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE?
HOW PATHETIC.
YOU'D KNOW WHAT I MEAN IF YOU SAW IT.
THAT DOLL--
...THE STREET POET WHO ONCE CAPTURED THE NATION'S IMAGINATION?
SHUT IT!!
THE LIFE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS KENTA EZAKI...
HEY, KOTOKO.
Y-YES?
What is he talking about?
HUM?
SORRY ABOUT THIS.

THAT GUY LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE THAT CREEPY "STAR."
BEAUTIFUL?! HELL, NO!
THANKS TO THAT DOLL, MY LIFE'S IN RUINS!
LAY OFF!
YOU MEAN THE STAR DOLL?!
WHERE DID YOU SEE IT?! IS IT BEAUTIFUL?!
YOUR LIFE'S IN RUINS BECAUSE OF A DOLL? I DON'T GET IT
.....


Story 5
Wheel of Fortune
[Part 3]

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO WORK YOUR MAGIC.
HUH?
WE'RE GOING TO REVIVE...
...THE STREET POET KENTA EZAKI RIGHT HERE.

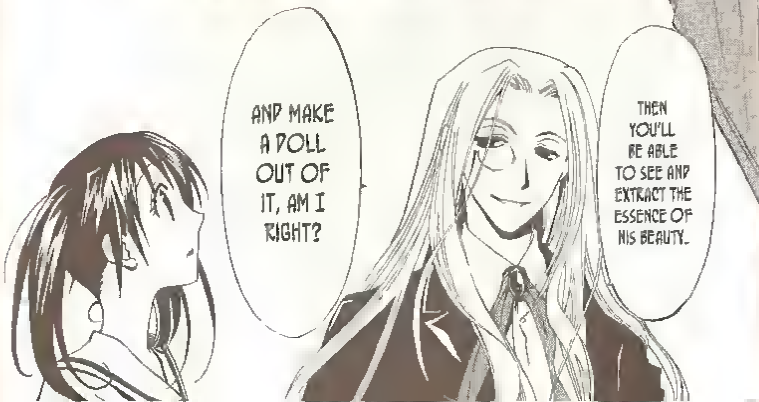
5 [Part 2] End


HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY POWER?
SO FUYU-SAN *DOES* KNOW ABOUT ENCROACHERS!

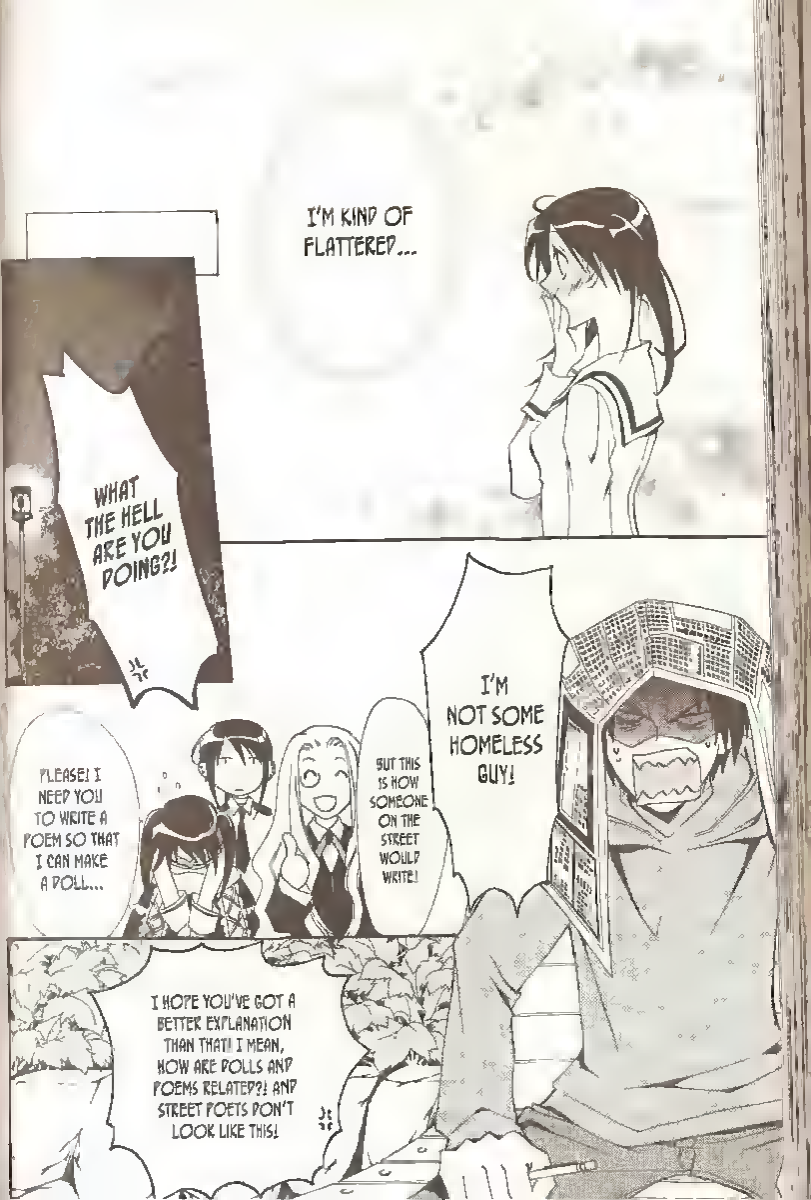
LIKE YUTA...
...I'M LONGING TO SEE THE POLL THAT YOU WILL CREATE.
SO YUTA-SAN REALLY *IS* EXCITED ABOUT MY NEW POLL.

R-REVIVE?
HOW ARE WE GOING TO...?
WE'RE GOING TO REVIVE...

BY RECREATING THE CONDITIONS WHERE HE ALWAYS USED TO CREATE POEMS--NAMELY, ON THE STREET.
...THE STREET POET KENTA EZAKI, RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW.


AND MAKE A POLL OUT OF IT, AM I RIGHT?
THEN YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE AND EXTRACT THE ESSENCE OF HIS BEAUTY.

?!
OH!
WAIT!
ANYWAY, I CAN'T BE A PART OF SOMETHING THAT'S GOT FOOL'S NAME ON IT!
WAAAH!!
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD STRUGGLE TOO MUCH. TAKUTO GETS ANNOYED EASILY.
H-HELP ME!!
DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS GUY!!
EH?
LET GO!
LET GO OF ME!!


I'M KIND OF FLATTERED...
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!
PLEASE! I NEED YOU TO WRITE A POEM SO THAT I CAN MAKE A POLL...
BUT THIS IS HOW SOMEONE ON THE STREET WOULD WRITE!
I'M NOT SOME HOMELESS GUY!
I HOPE YOU'VE GOT A BETTER EXPLANATION THAN THAT! I MEAN, HOW ARE POLLS AND POEMS RELATED?! AND STREET POETS DON'T LOOK LIKE THIS!

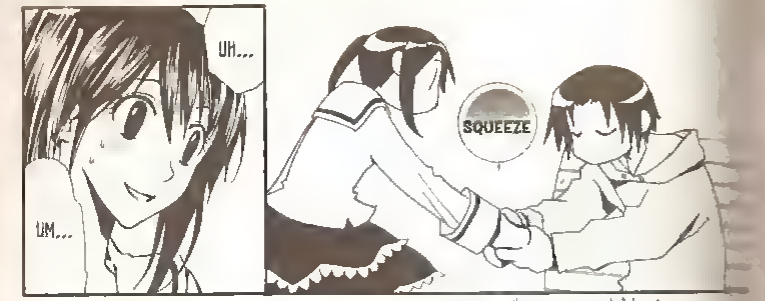
ONLY IF YOU HELP ME.
I WILL JUST CALL OFF YOUR MAN-POG!
I'D SAY FROM THE WAY HE'S FLIPPING OUT, THIS GUY...
IS IT BECAUSE TAKUTO-SAN KNOCKED HIM DOWN BEFORE?
...IS REALLY FREAKED OUT BY TAKUTO-SAN.
WHAT?
WE'RE DOING A FAVOR FOR YOU, REALLY.
EZAKI-KUN...
IF YOU THINK BACK TO YOUR POETRY WRITING IN THE PAST, IT'LL HELP YOU GET BACK THE FEELING YOU ONCE HAD FOR IT.

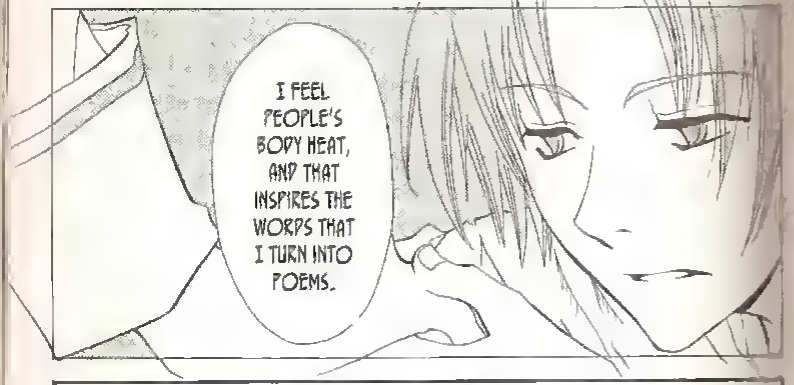
DON'T TELL ME YOU DIDN'T ENJOY THAT FEELING YOU HAD WHEN YOU WERE CREATING THE POEMS, HM?
THAT FEELING YOU GET WHEN YOU WEAVE THE WORDS THAT MOVE OTHER PEOPLE...
TEMPTING, ISN'T IT?
IF ALL GOES WELL, YOU MIGHT GET YOUR OLD GROOVE BACK.
.....
I THINK YOU SHOULD AT LEAST GIVE IT A SHOT.
!

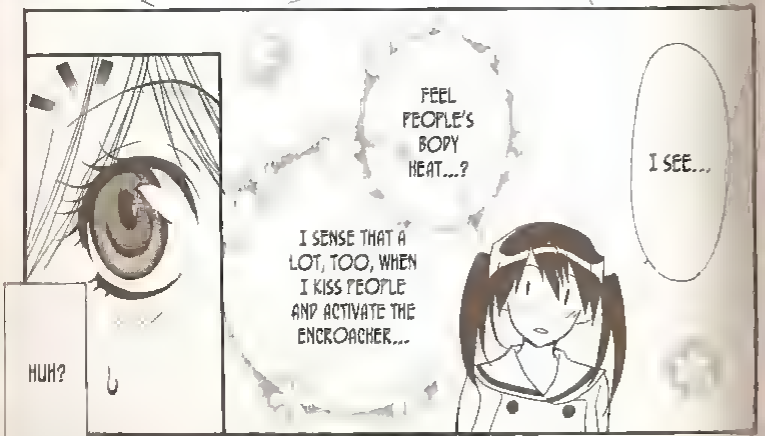
...IS WORKING HARD ON HIS DOLL RIGHT NOW.
NOT YET...
IT'S TOO EARLY...!

EZAKI-SAN'S EXPRESSION CHANGED...
I BET YUTA-SAN...
I'M SO HAPPY! NOW I CAN MAKE MY DOLL.
Whew!
...I GUESS IT COULD HELP ME IF I WANT TO WRITE POEMS AGAIN.
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

...RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
TIME, TIME...
IT'D BE AWFUL NICE TO BE ABLE TO CONTROL TIME...


UH...
UM...
SQUEEZE


I FEEL PEOPLE'S BODY HEAT, AND THAT INSPIRES THE WORDS THAT I TURN INTO POEMS.


HUH?
FEEL PEOPLE'S BODY HEAT...?
I SENSE THAT A LOT, TOO, WHEN I KISS PEOPLE AND ACTIVATE THE ENCROACHER...
I SEE...

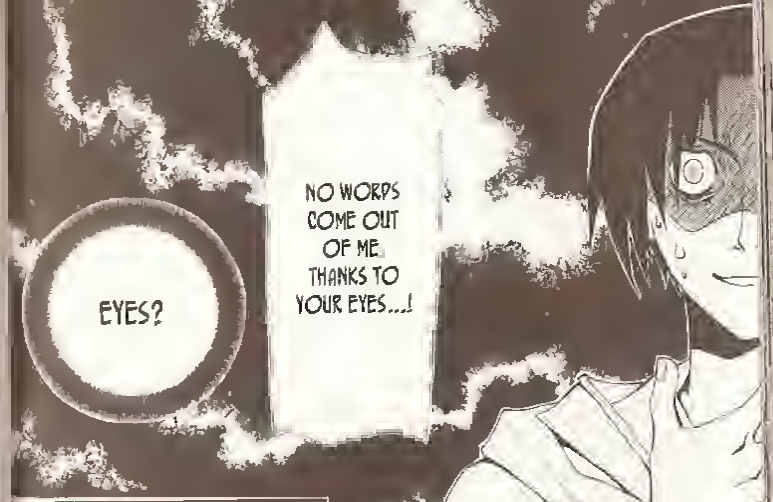
UM, EZAKI-SA--
AGH...
SHAKE
SHAKE
UNGH...
ARGH!!
EZAKI-SAN, ARE YOU--?!
DOES THAT MEAN...
...HE CAN'T GET ANY WORDS OUT?!
!
HA HA...
?!
FUYU-SAN?!
TAKUTO-SAN! FUYU-SAN! WHAT SHOULD I DO?!

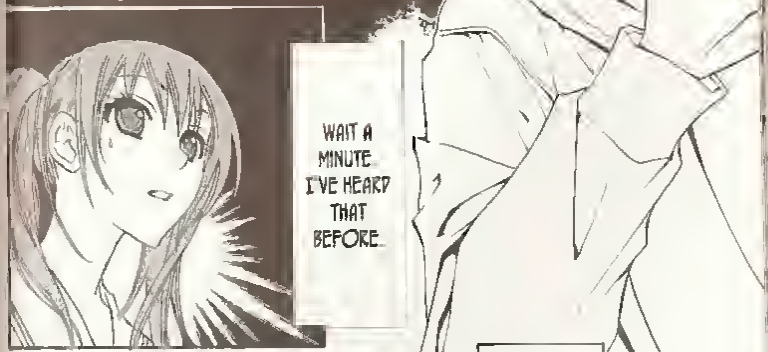
AH HA HA HA HA !!
SEE? I TOLD YOU IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE!
I CAN'T CREATE POEMS ANYMORE!
I CAN'T CONCEIVE OF THEM IN MY MIND, LET ALONE VOICE THE WORDS.
I HATE POETRY! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE!!
THAT'S A LIE.

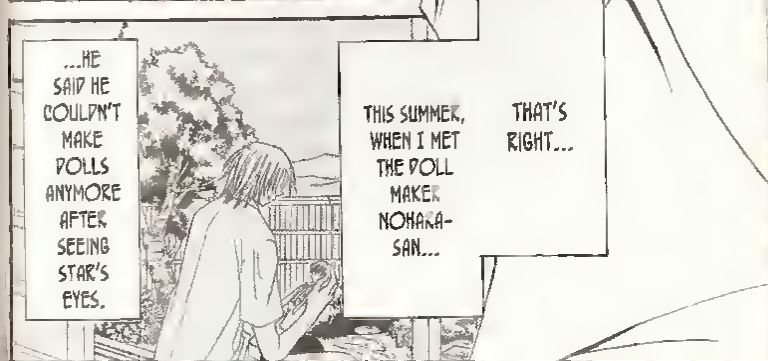
!
IS HE ANGRY BECAUSE HE WANTS TO CREATE POEMS?
WH--
WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING AT?
.....
A DOLL?
OH MY...
YOU REALLY PISS ME OFF.
YOU'RE JUST A STUPID DOLL, AND YOU WENT INTO MY HEAD, AND MESSED AROUND WITH IT.
EVER SINCE...
EVER SINCE I LOOKED INTO YOUR EYES, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CREATE MY POEMS.
EZAKI IS CONFUSING TAKUTO WITH STAR.

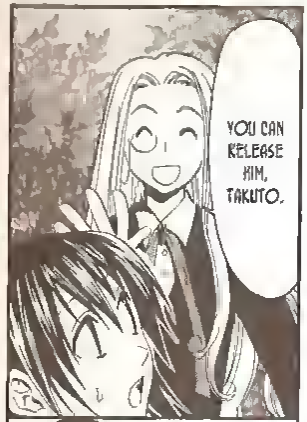
WHAT KIND OF DOLL IS...
STAR?

UH...
I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE CONFUSED.
YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT TAKUTO AND STAR ARE DIFFERENT THINGS.
KO-TOKO-CHAN!
SLAM


EYES?
NO WORDS COME OUT OF ME. THANKS TO YOUR EYES...!

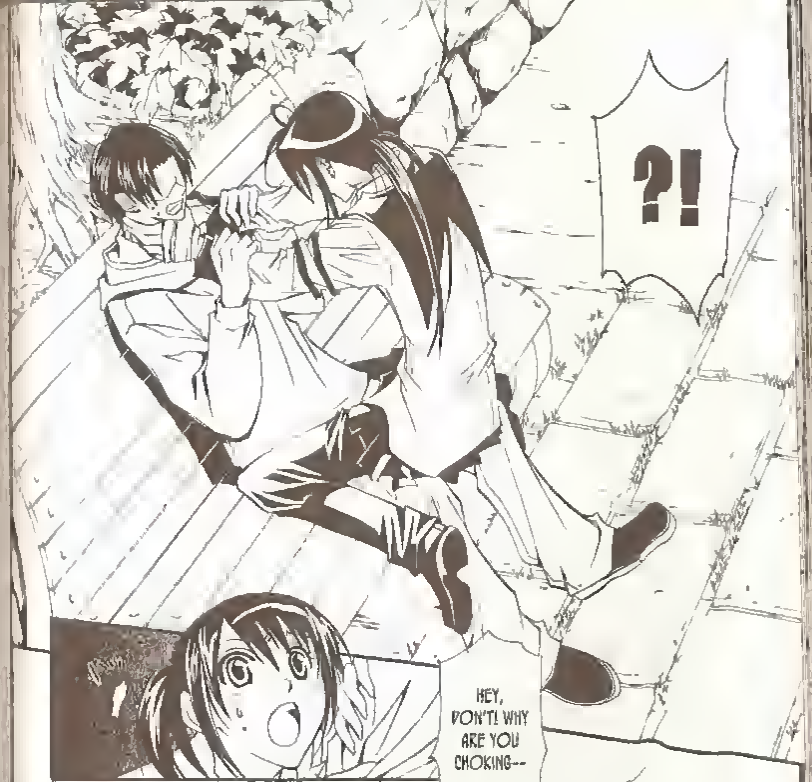

WAIT A MINUTE. I'VE HEARD THAT BEFORE.

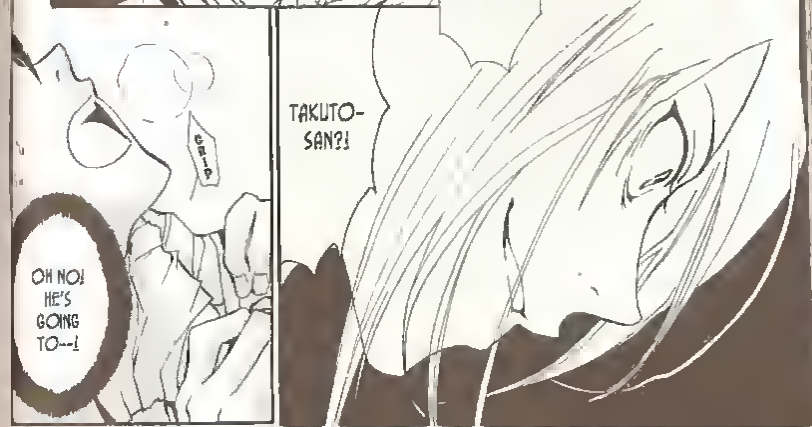

...HE SAID HE COULDN'T MAKE DOLLS ANYMORE AFTER SEEING STAR'S EYES.
THIS SUMMER, WHEN I MET THE DOLL MAKER NOHARA-SAN...
THAT'S RIGHT...


YOU CAN RELEASE HIM, TAKUTO.

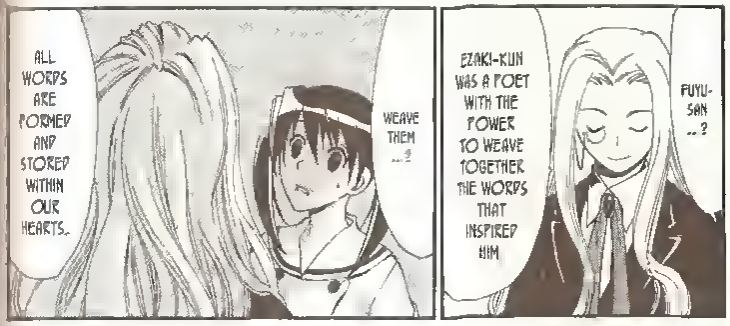
STOP, TAKUTO.

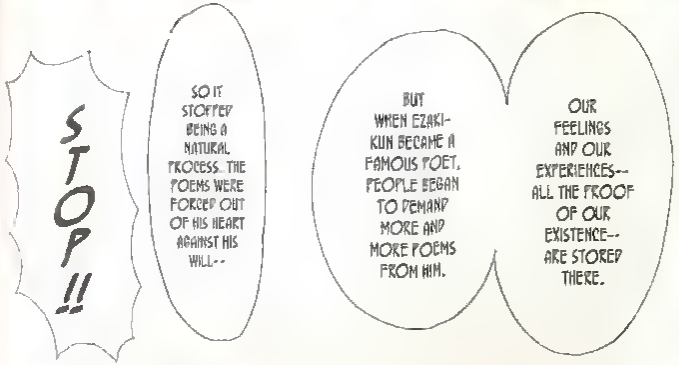
I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT LOOK ON TAKUTO-SAN'S FACE SINCE WHEN I FIRST MET HIM. AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TAKUTO-SAN AND FUYU-SAN...
I THOUGHT YUTA-SAN WAS THE ONLY PERSON TAKUTO-SAN LISTENED TO...
EZAKI-KUN, ALWAYS THE VICTIM.

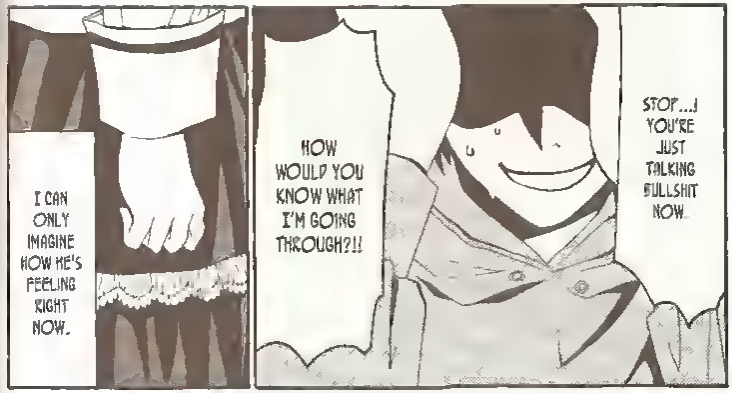

?!


HEY, DON'T! WHY ARE YOU CHOKING--
TAKUTO-SAN?!
OH NO! HE'S GOING TO--!

WHEN SOMETHING YOU ONCE LOVED TO DO BECOMES AN UNPLEASABLE CHORE.
I KNOW THAT IT CAN'T BE EASY...

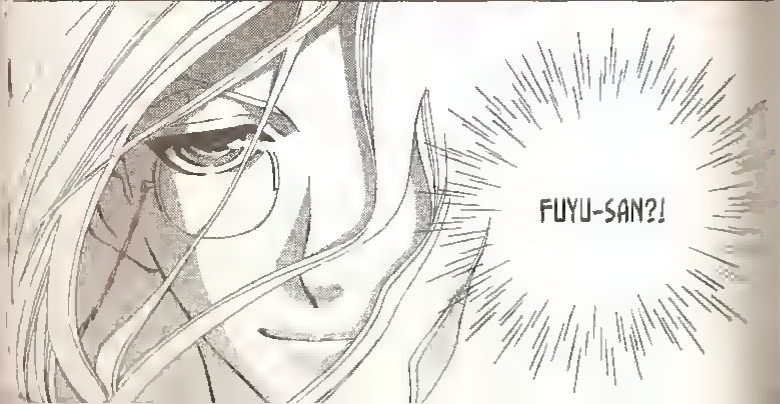

ALL WORDS ARE FORMED AND STORED WITHIN OUR HEARTS.
WEAVE THEM ...?
EZAKI-KUN WAS A POET WITH THE POWER TO WEAVE TOGETHER THE WORDS THAT INSPIRED HIM
FUYU-SAN ..?

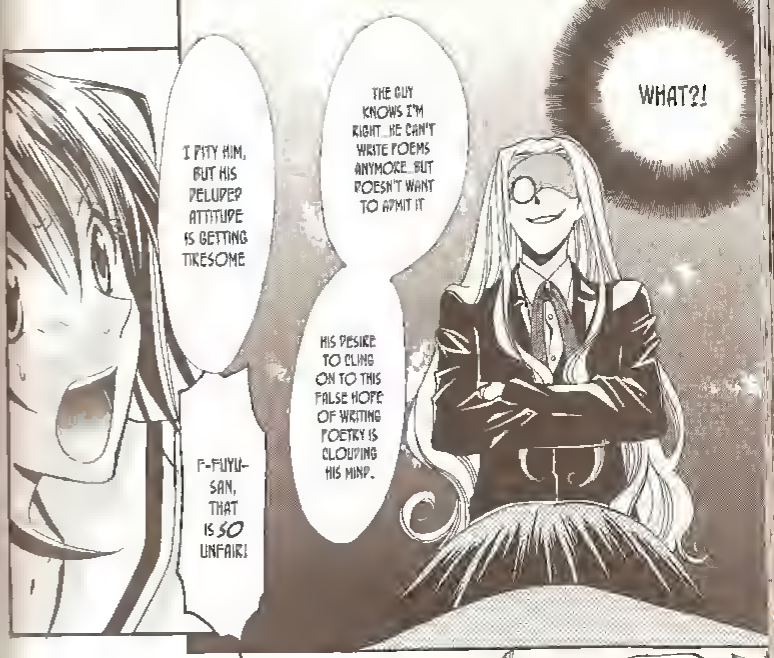

STOP!!
SO IT STOPPED BEING A NATURAL PROCESS. THE POEMS WERE FORCED OUT OF HIS HEART AGAINST HIS WILL--
BUT WHEN EZAKI-KUN BECAME A FAMOUS POET, PEOPLE BEGAN TO DEMAND MORE AND MORE POEMS FROM HIM.
OUR FEELINGS AND OUR EXPERIENCES--ALL THE PROOF OF OUR EXISTENCE--ARE STORED THERE.

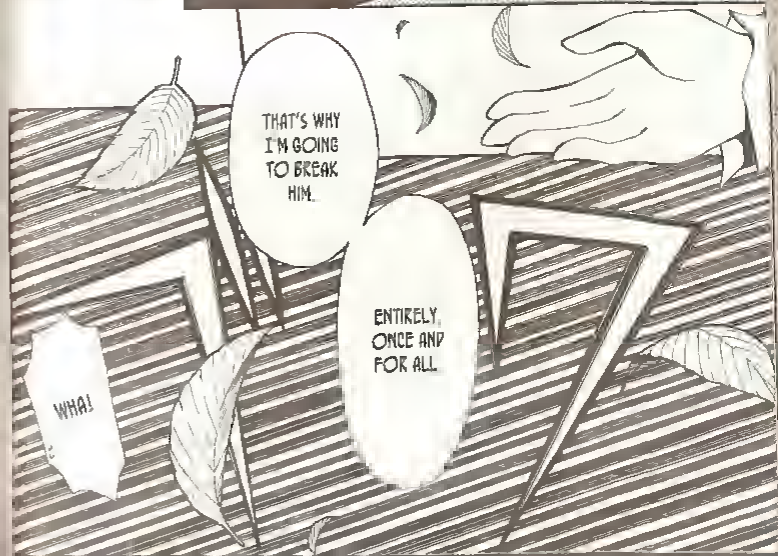

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW HE'S FEELING RIGHT NOW.
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING THROUGH?!!
STOP...! YOU'RE JUST TALKING BULLSHIT NOW.

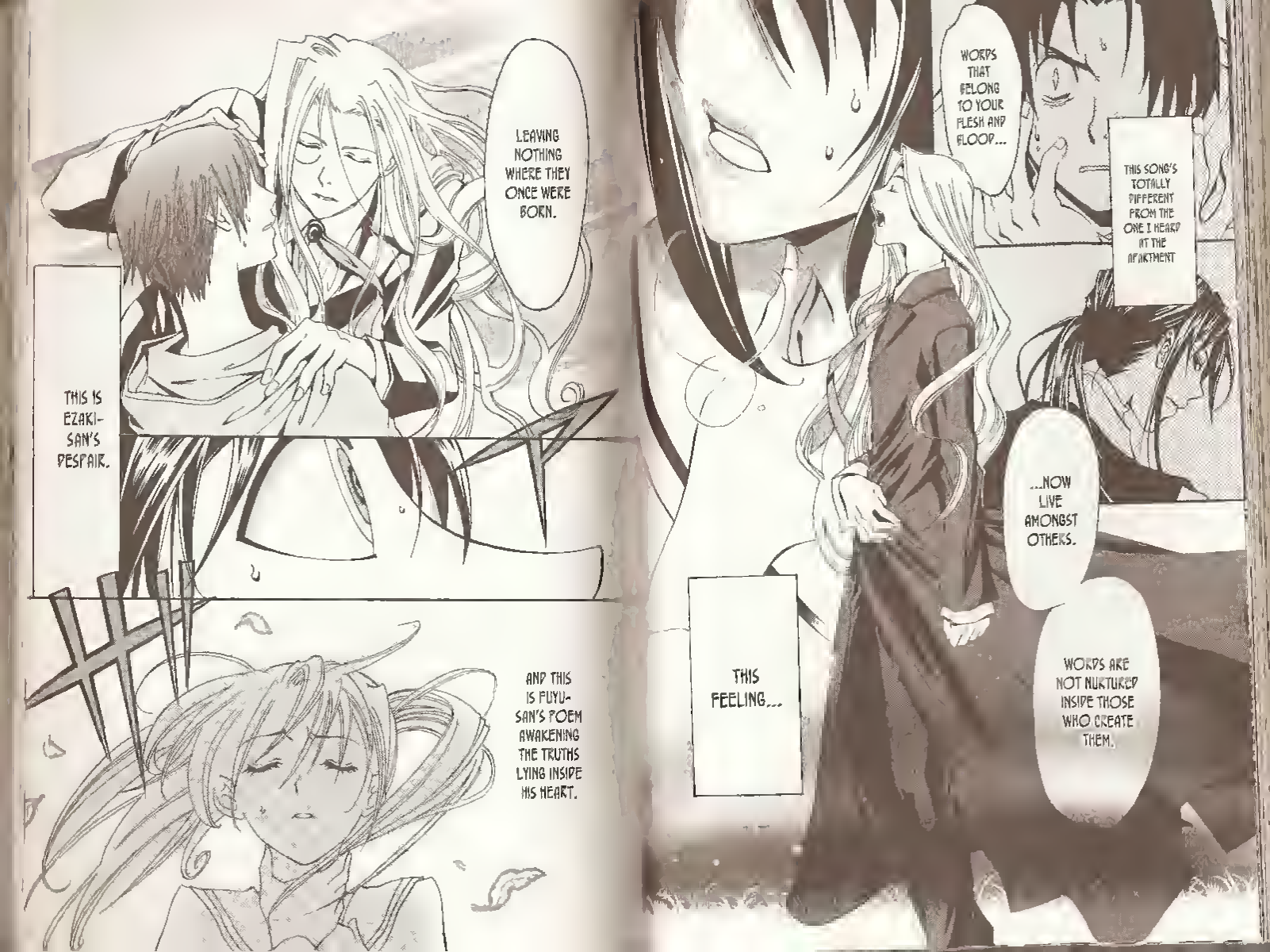
HE PISSES ME OFF.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
HOW CAN WE MAKE HIM FEEL AT EASE AGAIN?

I'M GOING TO SING A REQUIEM...
...TO THE WORDS LIVING AS GHOSTS INSIDE EZAKI'S HEART.

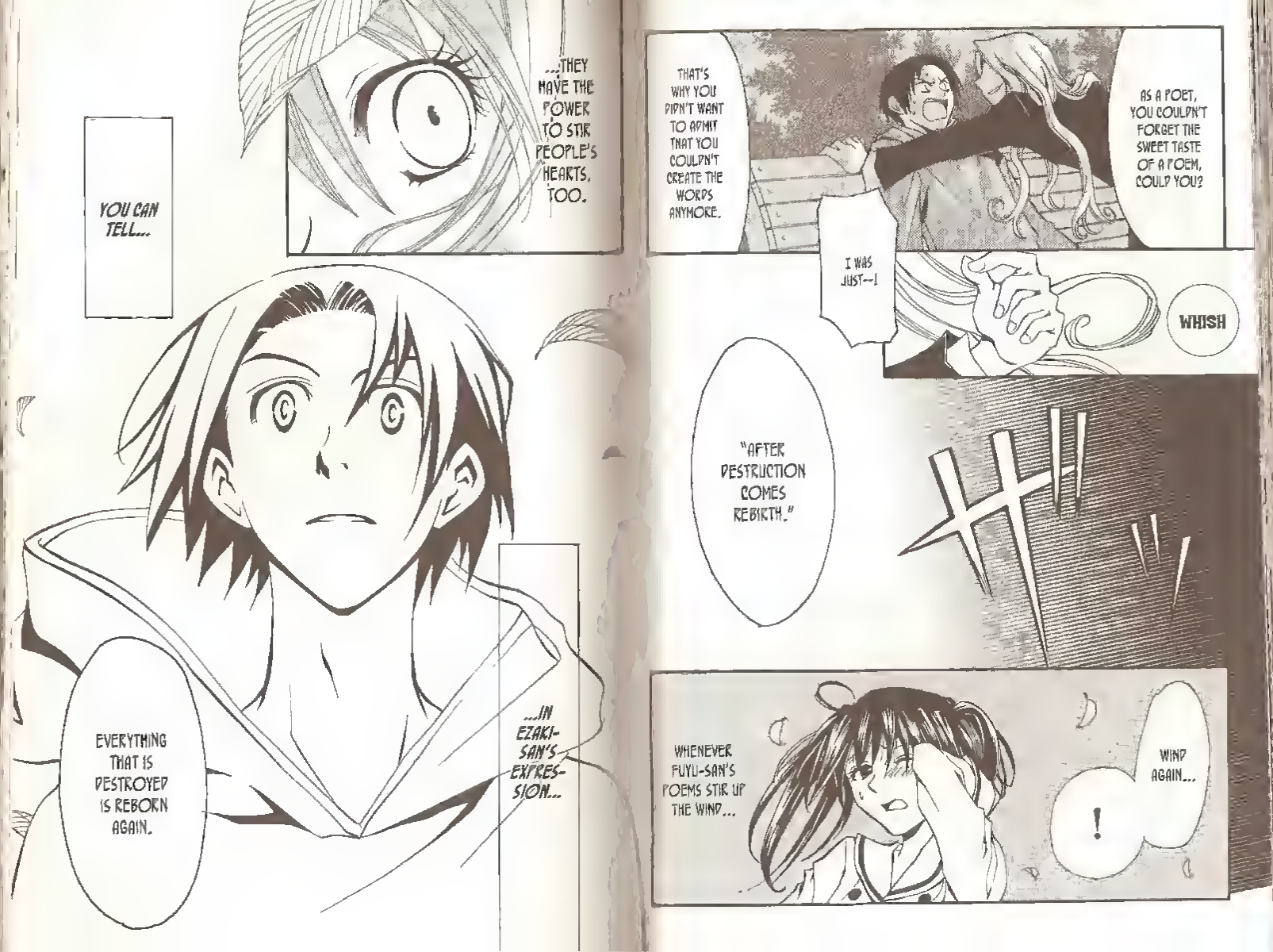

FUYU-SAN?!


WHAT?!
THE GUY KNOWS I'M RIGHT...HE CAN'T WRITE POEMS ANYMORE. BUT DOESN'T WANT TO ADMIT IT
I PITY HIM, BUT HIS DELUDED ATTITUDE IS GETTING TIRESOME
HIS DESIRE TO CLING ON TO THIS FALSE HOPE OF WRITING POETRY IS CLOUDING HIS MIND.
F-FUYU-SAN, THAT IS SO UNFAIR!

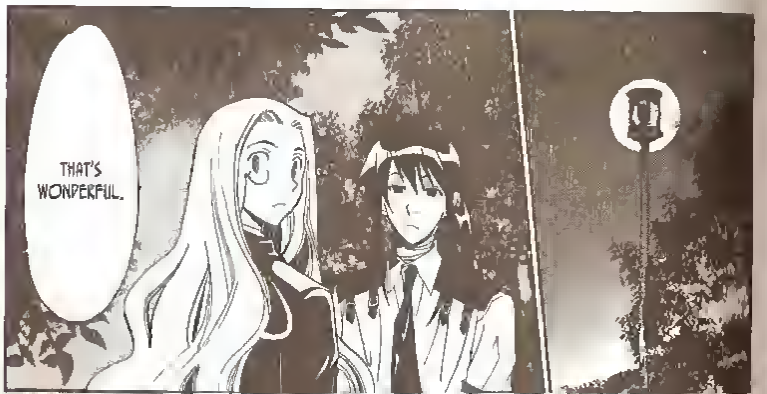

THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO BREAK HIM.
ENTIRELY, ONCE AND FOR ALL.
WHA!

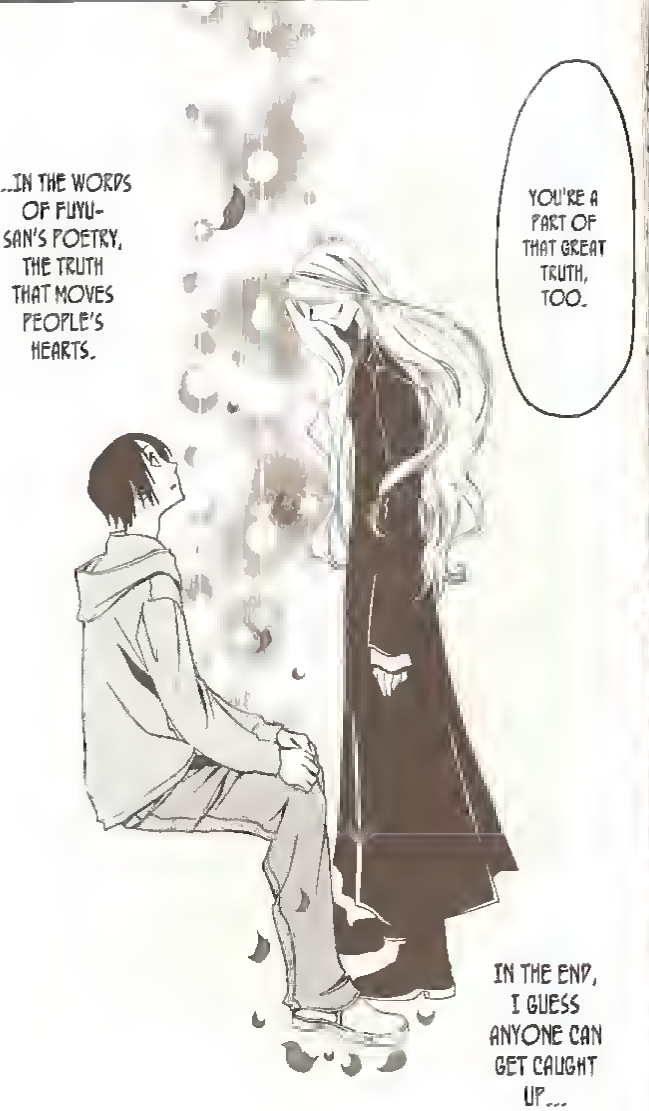

LEAVING NOTHING WHERE THEY ONCE WERE BORN.
THIS IS EZAKI-SAN'S DESPAIR.
AND THIS IS FUYU-SAN'S POEM AWAKENING THE TRUTHS LYING INSIDE HIS HEART.
WORDS THAT BELONG TO YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD...
THIS SONG'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE I HEARD AT THE APARTMENT
...NOW LIVE AMONGST OTHERS.
WORDS ARE NOT NURTURED INSIDE THOSE WHO CREATE THEM.
THIS FEELING...

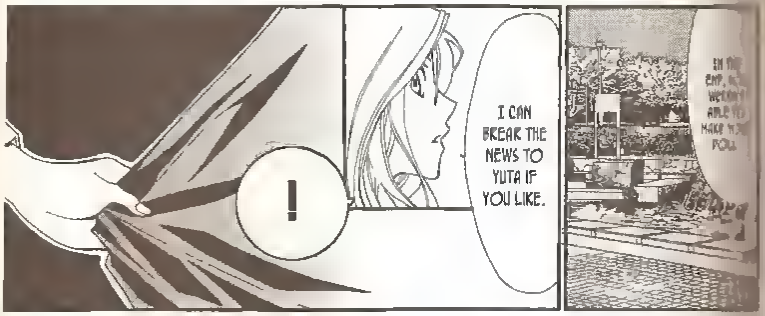
I GET IT.
I HAVE NOTHING LEFT INSIDE ME.
THERE ARE NO WORDS.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT IN MY HEART TO CREATE POEMS WITH!
IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY RAW MATERIAL TO MOLD INTO SHAPE YOU'RE LEFT WITH NOTHING
THIS SOUNDS OBVIOUS, BUT MAKING THAT POINT WITH EZAKI IS ONLY GOING TO DRIVE HIM OVER THE EDGE!
EZAKI-SAN IS GOING TO FEEL MAJOR DESPAIR!
I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO PUSH HIM THAT FAR...
REALLY?
UM, FUYU-SAN!
THIS ISN'T ABOUT DOLL MAKING ANYMORE!
I DIDN'T SAY HE'D LOST HIS ABILITY.
I SAID HIS HEART WAS EMPTY...
WHAT?
KOTOKO-CHAN, I'M ACTUALLY A VERY SHREWD GUY.
WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY THAT?
WHEN SOMETHING THAT ONCE EXISTED DIES AWAY, THE THING THAT TAKES ITS PLACE IS...
...DESIRE.


...THEY HAVE THE POWER TO STIR PEOPLE'S HEARTS, TOO.
YOU CAN TELL...
...IN EZAKI-SAN'S EXPRESSION...
EVERYTHING THAT IS DESTROYED IS REBORN AGAIN.
THAT'S WHY YOU DIDN'T WANT TO ADMIT THAT YOU COULDN'T CREATE THE WORDS ANYMORE.
AS A POET, YOU COULDN'T FORGET THE SWEET TASTE OF A POEM, COULD YOU?
I WAS JUST--!
WHISH
"AFTER DESTRUCTION COMES REBIRTH."
WHENEVER FUYU-SAN'S POEMS STIR UP THE WIND...
WIND AGAIN...
!

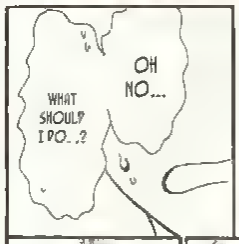
ANYONE...
BADUM

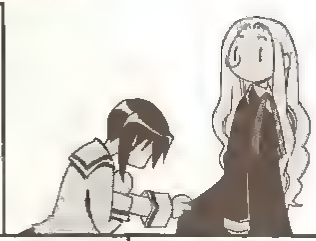

THAT'S WONDERFUL.

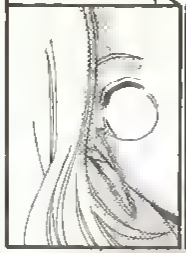

...IN THE WORDS OF FUYU-SAN'S POETRY, THE TRUTH THAT MOVES PEOPLE'S HEARTS.
YOU'RE A PART OF THAT GREAT TRUTH, TOO.
IN THE END, I GUESS ANYONE CAN GET CAUGHT UP...

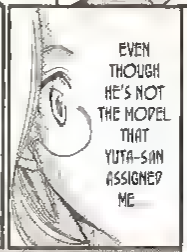

!
I CAN BREAK THE NEWS TO YUTA IF YOU LIKE.

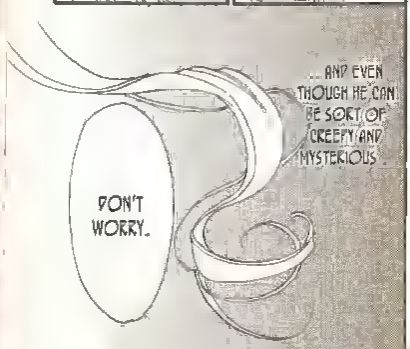
IN THE END, HE WASN'T ABLE TO MAKE A DOLL.


OH NO...
WHAT SHOULD I DO..?






EVEN THOUGH HE'S NOT THE MODEL THAT YUTA-SAN ASSIGNED ME

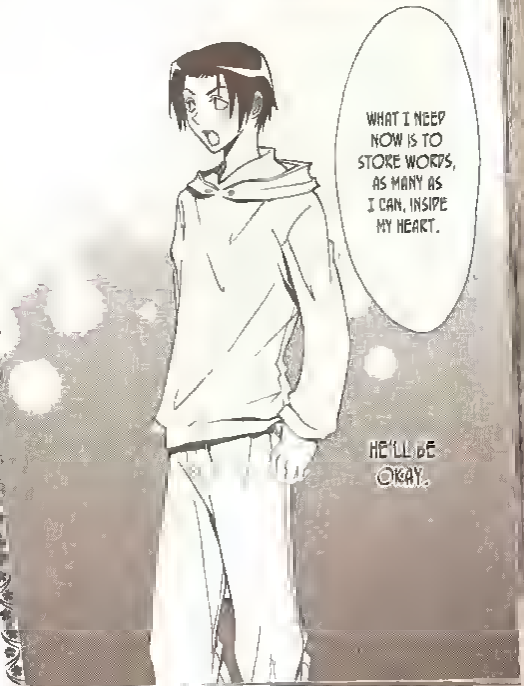

...AND EVEN THOUGH HE CAN BE SORT OF CREEPY AND MYSTERIOUS.
DON'T WORRY.

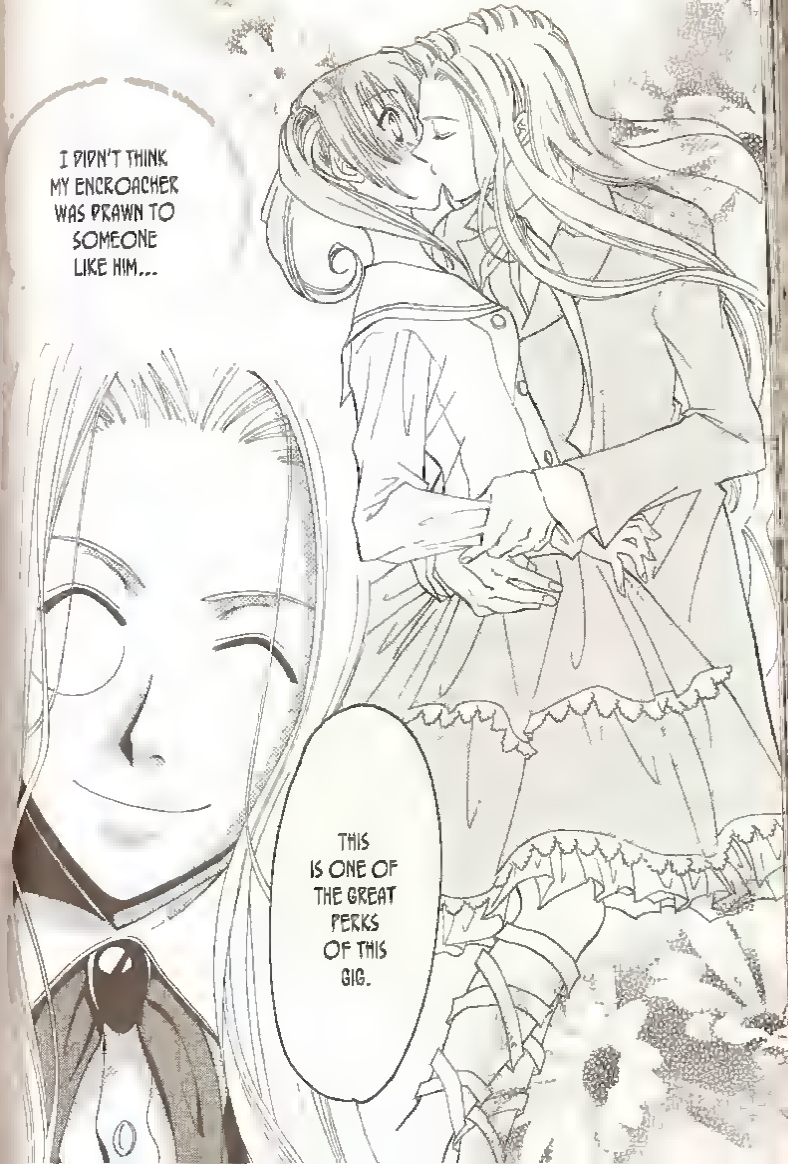
カァー
I HAVE THE DESIRE TO MAKE A DOLL.
BUT ONE INSPIRED FROM FUYU-SAN.

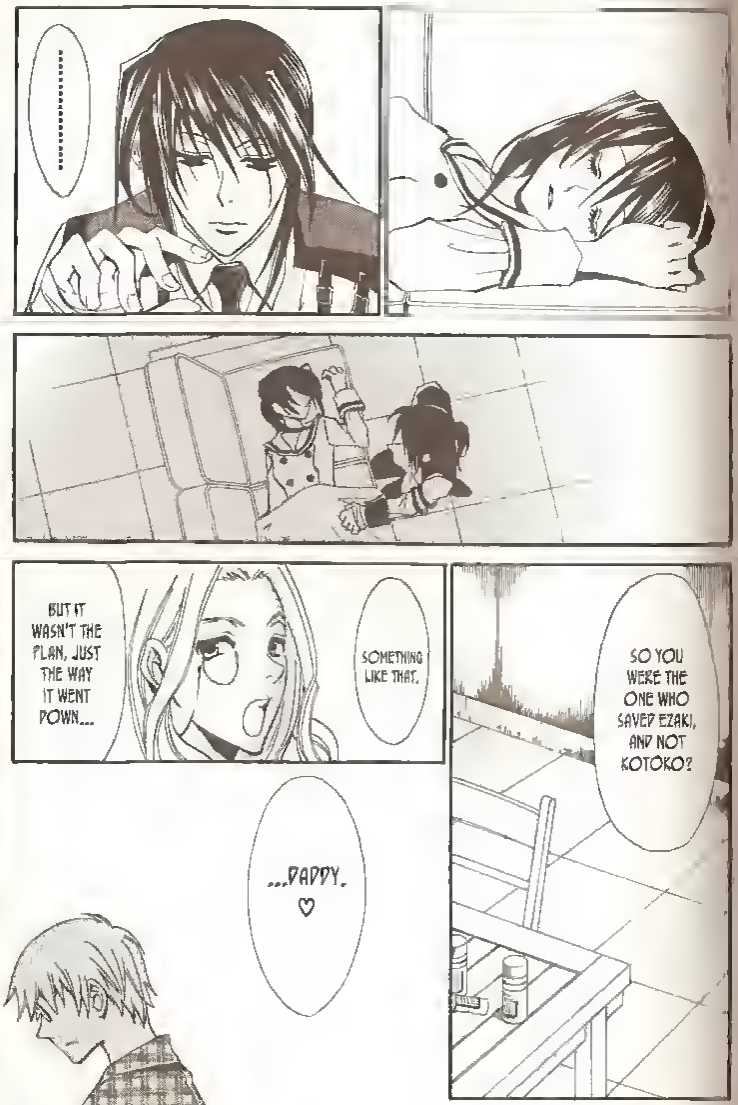
HIS EXPRESSION IS SERENE AND CALM.
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S COMPLETELY OVER HIS SLUMP.

...A COMPLETE WRECK.
I GUESS I WAS...

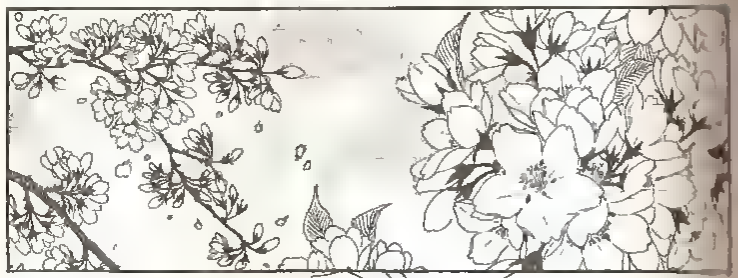
I'M SURE EZAKI-SAN'S BACK ON TRACK NOW.


WHAT I NEED NOW IS TO STORE WORDS, AS MANY AS I CAN, INSIDE MY HEART.
HE'LL BE OKAY.

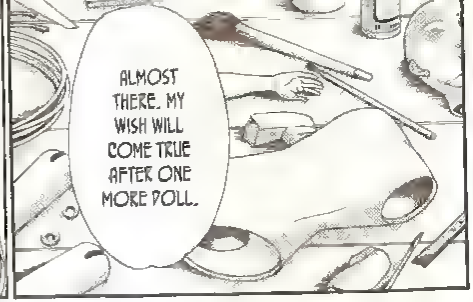

I DIDN'T THINK MY ENCROACHER WAS DRAWN TO SOMEONE LIKE HIM...
THIS IS ONE OF THE GREAT PERKS OF THIS GIG.


.....
BUT IT WASN'T THE PLAN, JUST THE WAY IT WENT DOWN...
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
SO YOU WERE THE ONE WHO SAVED EZAKI, AND NOT KOTOKO?
...DADDY. ♡

WHAT?
HUH?
WHY...
Fwish
...DID A CHILD RISE UP FROM THE ENCROACHER?

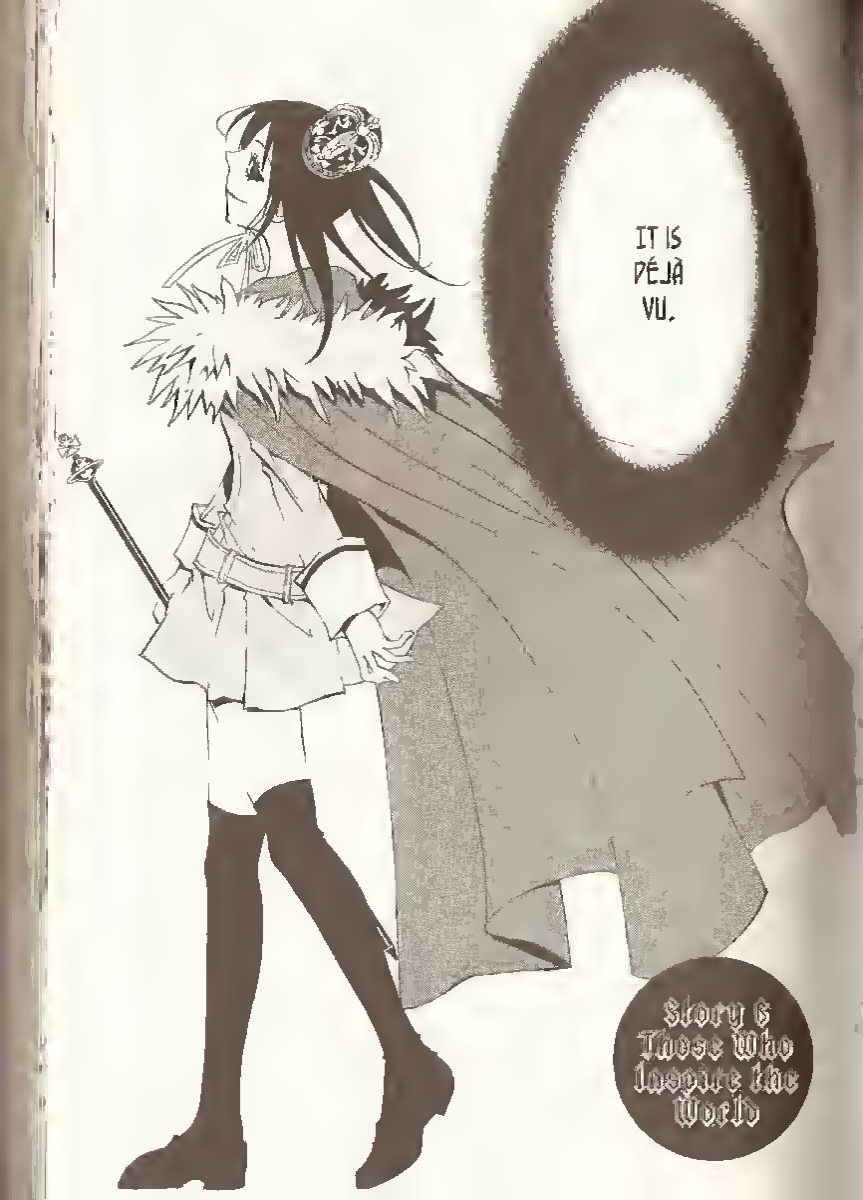


WE NEED TO HURRY.

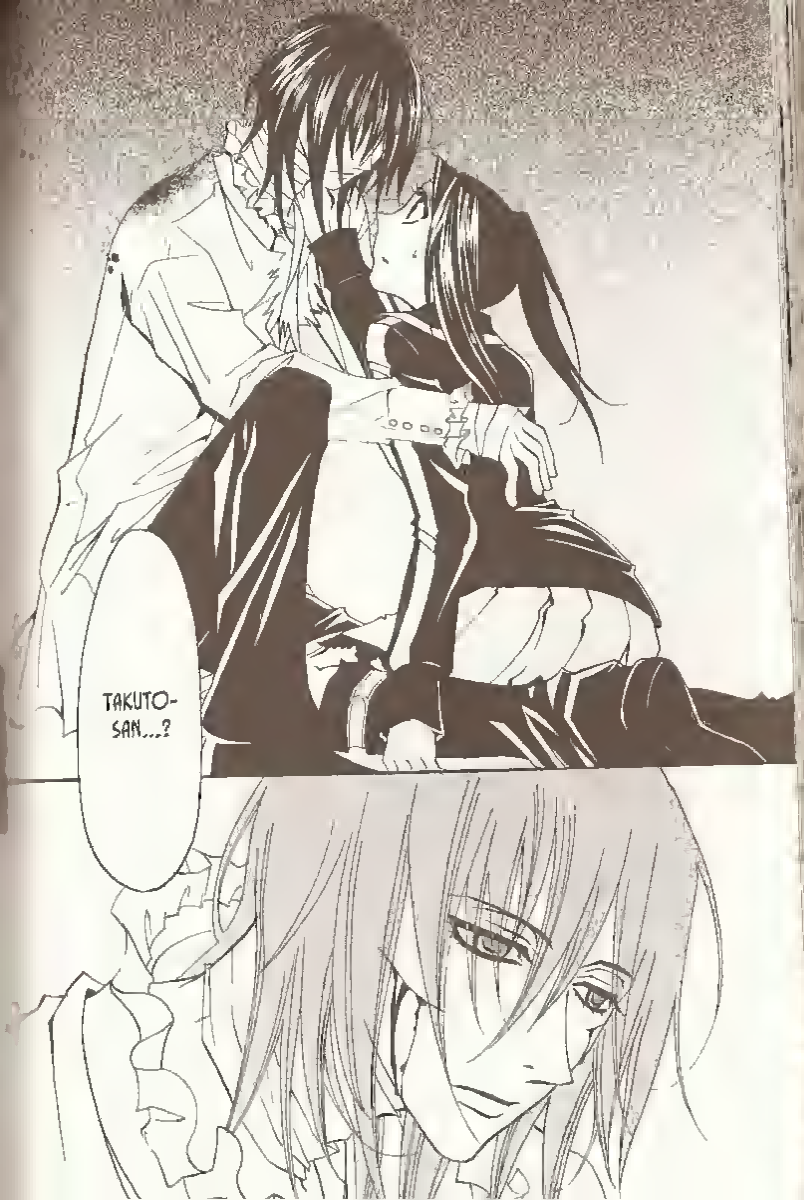

ALMOST THERE. MY WISH WILL COME TRUE AFTER ONE MORE POLL.

THAT'S RIGHT!!
MY BODY IS AT ITS LIMIT ALREADY.

5 [Part 3] End

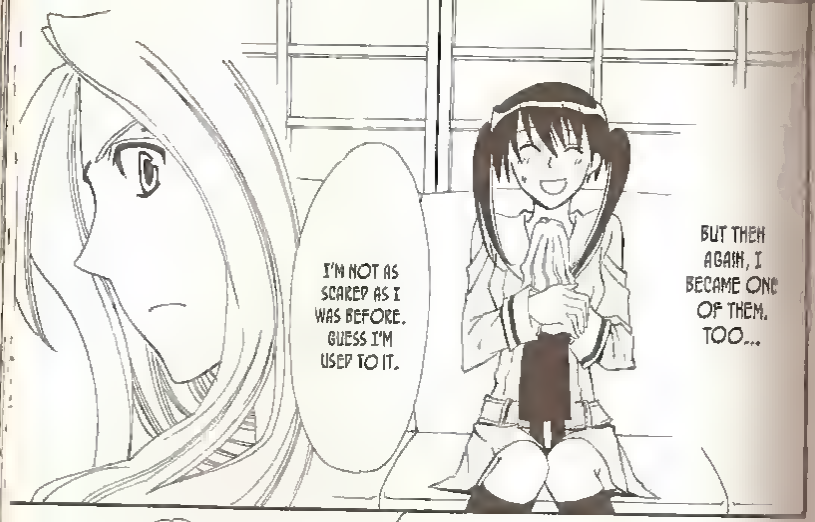


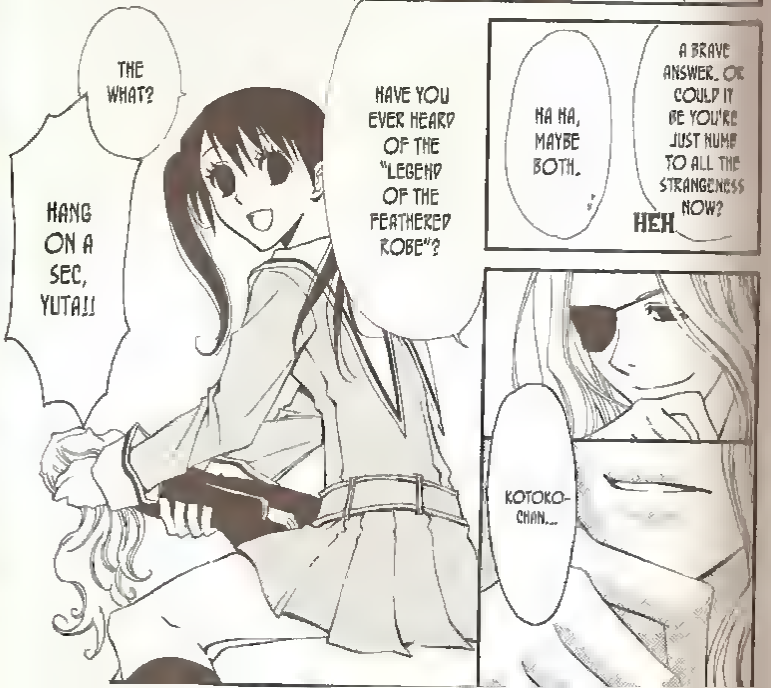
Story 6
Those Who Inspire the World

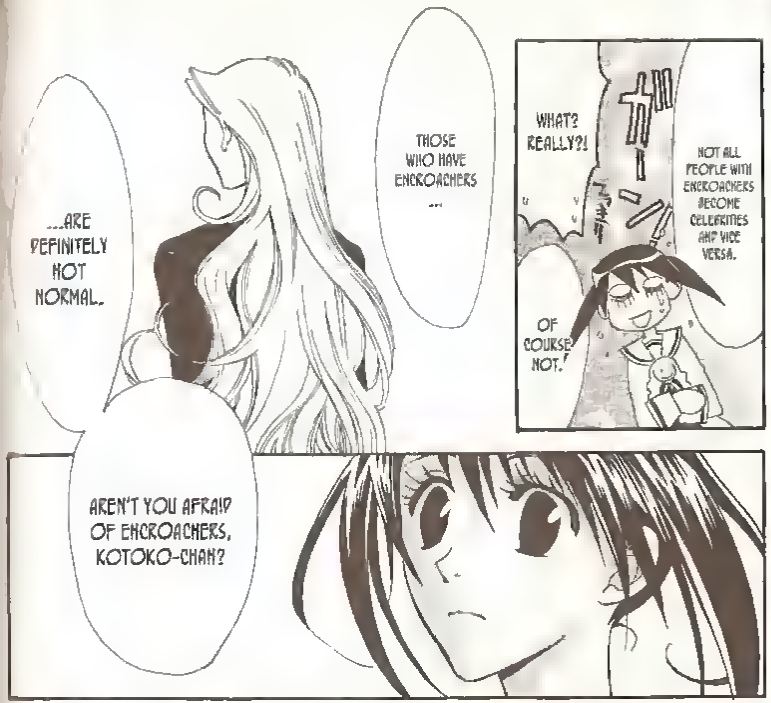


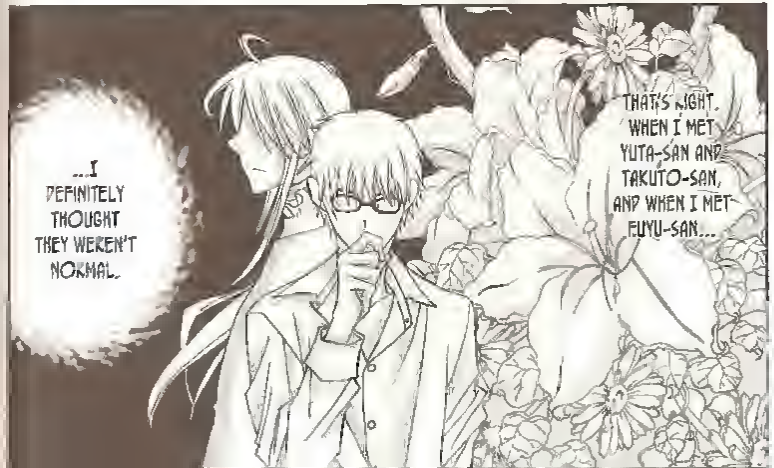
HE'S ONE, TOO.
AN ENCROACHER EXTRACTS PEOPLE'S ATTRACTION.
AND IF YOU USE THE COLLECTED ATTRACTION ON YOURSELF, YOU CAN BECOME THAT MUCH MORE ATTRACTIVE TO OTHERS. IT DEPENDS ON THE INDIVIDUAL, THOUGH.
WHAT? YOU MEAN ALL THE POPULAR CELEBRITIES HAVE THEM?
THE ACTOR PLAYING THE MAIN ROLE IN THIS SHOW IS ONE TOO.
THE REASON WHY THEIR POPULARITY IS NEVER CONSTANT IS BECAUSE THEIR ENCROACHER'S DEVELOPMENT IS AFFECTING THEM.
THEIR DEVELOP-MENT...?

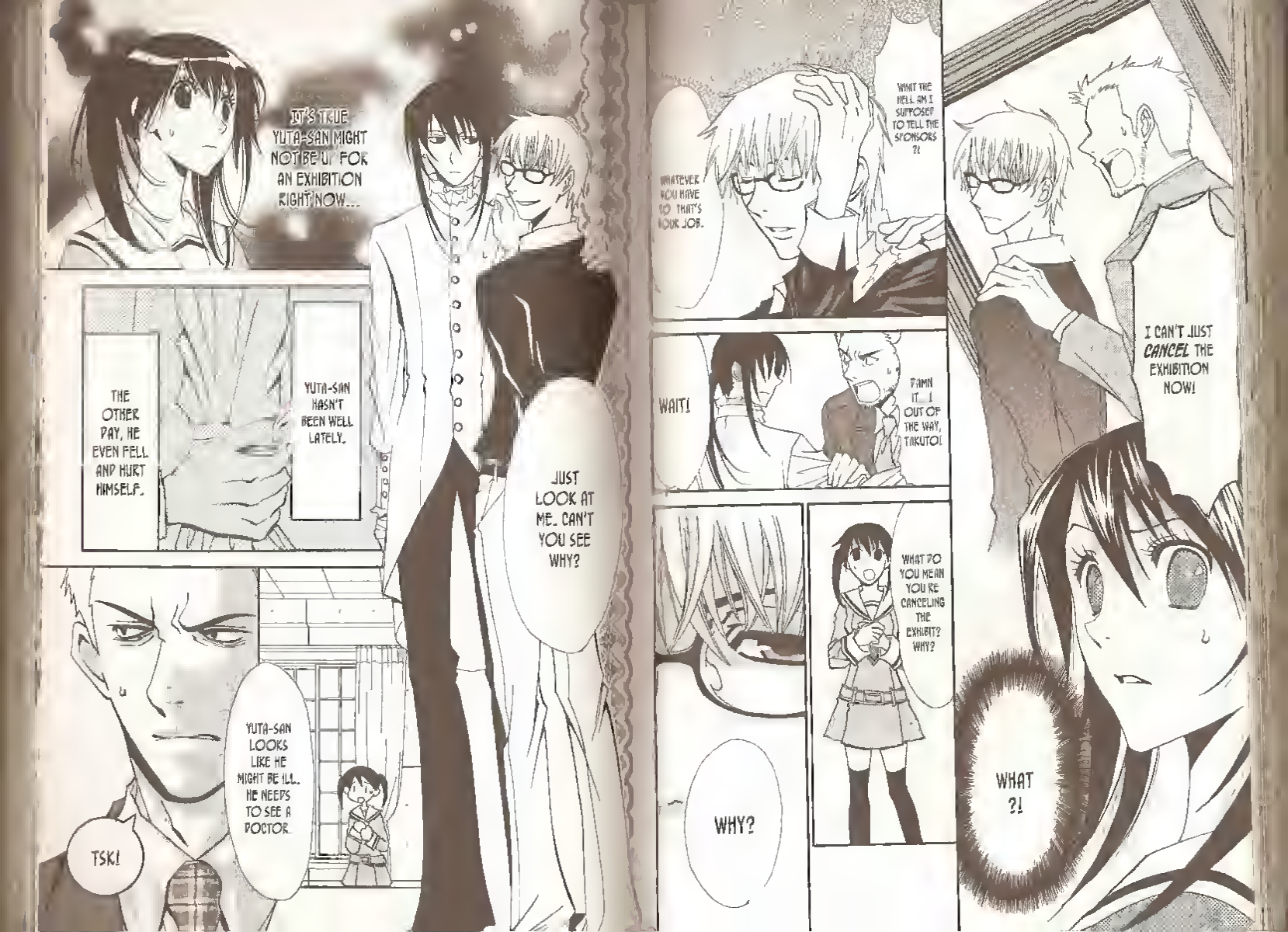
WHEN YOU SAY DEVELOP, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAT HUMAN-LIKE CREATURE?
I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT MY ENCROACHER HAD SPAWNED SOME SORT OF CHILD WHEN I WAS EXTRACTING FUYU-SAN'S ATTRACTION THE OTHER DAY
AND YUTA-SAN'S ENCROACHER GAVE RISE TO A MORE MATURE-LOOKING WOMAN.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
I ONLY SHOW MY ENCROACHER TO PEOPLE WHO ARE EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE TO ME.
AND ONE MORE THING.
OH!
YOU HAVE AN ENCROACHER TOO, RIGHT? I WANT TO SEE IT.
.....


I'M NOT AS SCARED AS I WAS BEFORE. GUESS I'M USED TO IT.
BUT THEN AGAIN, I BECAME ONE OF THEM, TOO...


THE WHAT?
HANG ON A SEC, YUTA!!
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE "LEGEND OF THE FEATHERED ROBE"?
HA HA, MAYBE BOTH.
A BRAVE ANSWER. OR COULD IT BE YOU'RE JUST NUMB TO ALL THE STRANGENESS NOW?
HEH
KOTOKO-CHAN...


...ARE DEFINITELY NOT NORMAL.
THOSE WHO HAVE ENCROACHERS ...
WHAT? REALLY?!
NOT ALL PEOPLE WITH ENCROACHERS BECOME CELEBRITIES AND VICE VERSA.
OF COURSE NOT.
AREN'T YOU AFRAID OF ENCROACHERS, KOTOKO-CHAN?


...I DEFINITELY THOUGHT THEY WEREN'T NORMAL.
THAT'S RIGHT. WHEN I MET YUTA-SAN AND TAKUTO-SAN, AND WHEN I MET FUYU-SAN...


WHAT ?!
I CAN'T JUST CANCEL THE EXHIBITION NOW!
WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL THE SPONSORS ?!
WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO THAT'S YOUR JOB.
WHY?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE CANCELING THE EXHIBIT? WHY?
WAIT!
DAMN IT... I OUT OF THE WAY, TAKUTO!
IT'S TRUE YUTA-SAN MIGHT NOT BE UP FOR AN EXHIBITION RIGHT NOW...
JUST LOOK AT ME. CAN'T YOU SEE WHY?
THE OTHER DAY, HE EVEN FELL AND HURT HIMSELF.
YUTA-SAN HASN'T BEEN WELL LATELY.
TSK!
YUTA-SAN LOOKS LIKE HE MIGHT BE ILL. HE NEEDS TO SEE A DOCTOR.

I WOULD NEVER TELL YOU TO MAKE UP IF THIS WEREN'T URGENT!
DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TELLING YOU?
IF YOU REALLY NEED A POLL FAST, YOU'VE GOT STAR! I WANT TO SEE STAR ANYWAY, SO THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY.
I CAN'T SHOW YOU STAR.

BUT I REALLY WANT TO SEE...
...YOUR ULTIMATE MASTERPIECE !!
GRAB

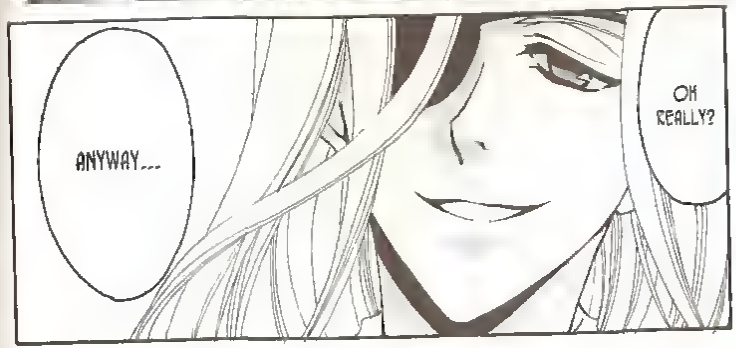
YOU OWE ME BIG TIME.
...YEAH.
I WON'T FORGET.
YUTA-SAN...
FOOL ROSE
...CAN'T WANT TO CANCEL THE EXHIBITION, EITHER.

I THOUGHT MY POLLS WEREN'T THAT URGENT.
WHAT?
YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON YOUR POLL MAKING, AND FINISH YOUR POLLS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
RESEARCH ON YOUR NEXT TARGET.
ポイ
WHAT IS THIS?

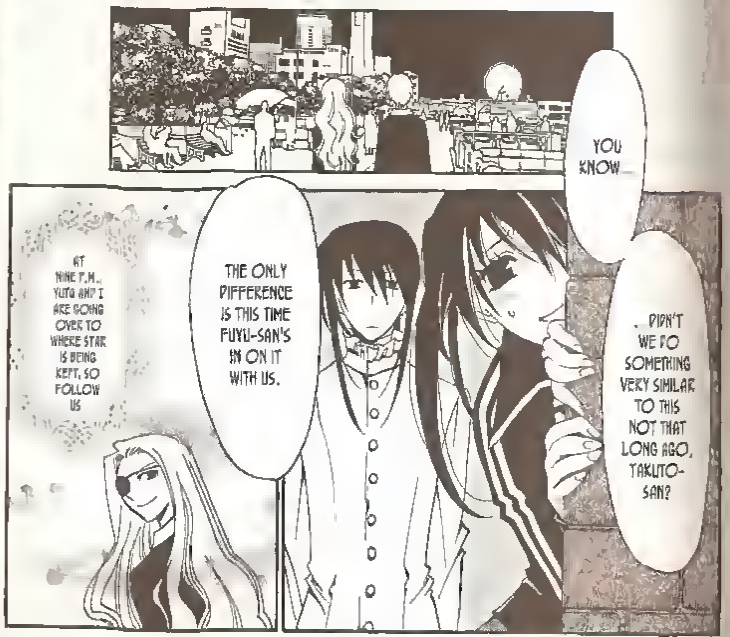
...YUTA-SAN *REALLY* WANTED TO TELL ME?
IS THAT WHAT...
KOTOKO-CHAN.
CAN I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?

KOTOKO, I JUST WANT TO...
YUTA-SAN...?
I...
NO ONE WILL SEE STAR EVER AGAIN, NOT IF I CAN HELP IT.
AND YOU NEED TO BE MORE MINDFUL OF YOUR PLACE. YOU'RE JUST MY ASSISTANT.

.....
YOU'RE SURE IN A FOUL MOOD TODAY, YUTA.
WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST TELL HER THE TRUTH? TELL HER, "I'M NOT SHOWING YOU STAR BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU."
THAT WAS VERY UNLIKE YOU TO SAY THOSE WORDS.
I ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH.


ANYWAY...
OH REALLY?

...MR. PRINCE?
WHY DON'T WE GO TRY TO FIX UP OUR PRINCESS' BAD MOOD?...


AT NINE P.M., YUTA AND I ARE GOING OVER TO WHERE STAR IS BEING KEPT, SO FOLLOW US
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THIS TIME FUYU-SAN'S IN ON IT WITH US.
YOU KNOW...
...DIDN'T WE DO SOMETHING VERY SIMILAR TO THIS NOT THAT LONG AGO, TAKUTO-SAN?

THUD
.....
Trash Dump Area
Please leave your trash on collection day
ドキ
ドキ
THAT WAS SOME HIT! I LOST MY BALANCE THERE.
WHAT WAS THAT? I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM SMILE.
I SHOULD'VE TAKEN A PICTURE OF THAT, I'M SO STUPID!!
Ohhh!
YOU WANT ME TO PET YOU...? WERE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?
I'M SORRY TO GET YOU MIXED UP IN THIS, TAKUTO-SAN.
BUT YOU'VE NEVER SEEN STAR EITHER, RIGHT?
PFFT
NOD
AM I REALLY THAT GOOD AT PETTING HEADS?
RUB RUB
RUB RUB RUB
WHY WOULD YOU WANT ME PETTING YOUR HEAD ANYWAY?
YOU'RE A FUNNY ONE, TAKUTO-SAN.
SERIOUSLY? I DIDN'T THINK YOU COULD BE GOOD OR BAD AT IT.
Hee hee!

PLOP
WIND...?
WHAT...? HOW DID YOU GET THAT...?
!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO FOLLOW ME.

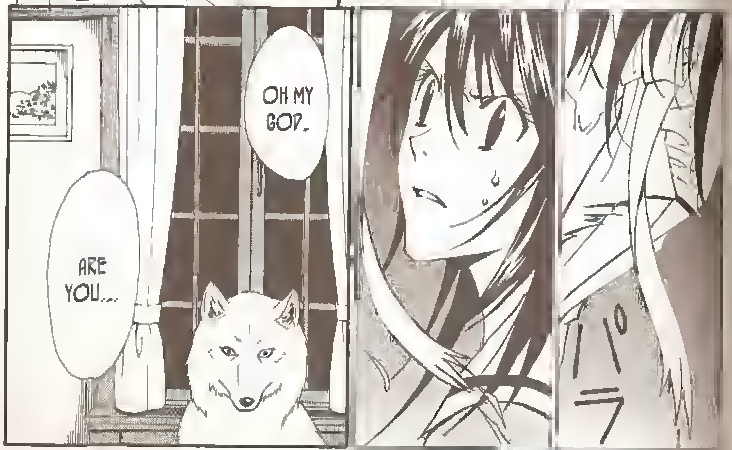
THIS PLACE...
?!
SO IT'S TRUE. STAR IS HERE.
IS THIS THE SAME MANSION I WAS AT EARLIER?

WAIT--!!
WAIT, YUTA-SAN!!
?!

YUKUTO?
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
HUH?
DO I HAVE TO HURT YOU FOR YOU TO LEARN?
HE'S ANGRY?!
FUYU, I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU.
ROGER.
HE'S USUALLY SO OBEDIENT TO YUTA-SAN...

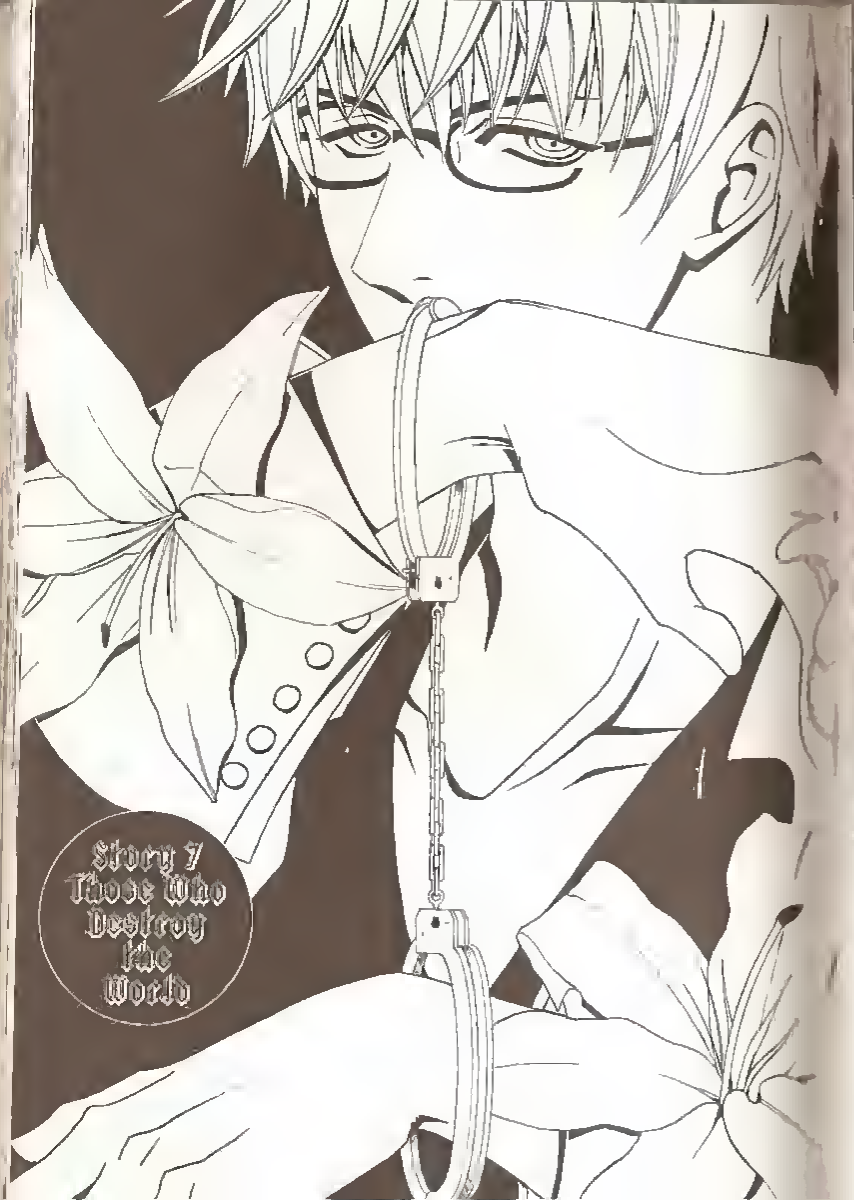
NOOO!!
SPLAT
SPLAT
NO...!
A WOLF?!
OKAY.
LET'S HAVE SOME FUN NOW, SHALL WE?
TMP
THAT VOICE...
FUYU-SAN?!

...DÉJÀ VU?

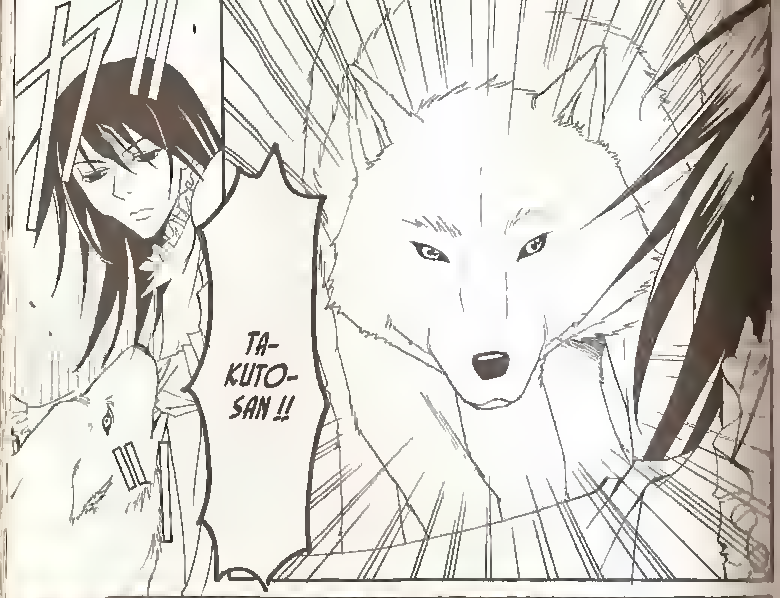

OH MY GOD..
ARE YOU...

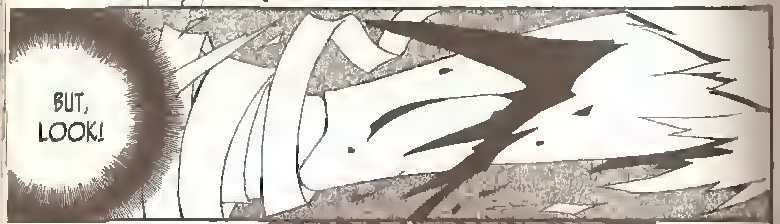
A RECURRING SCENE...
COULD IT BE...?

IS THIS...


Story 7
Those Who
Destroy
the
World

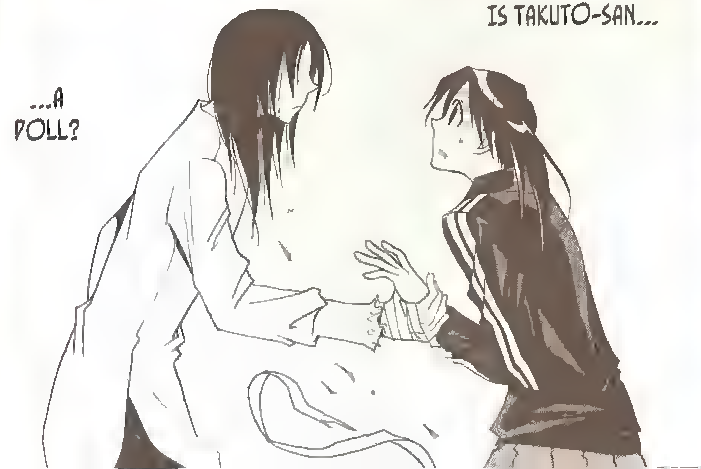
...A
DOLL?


TA-
KUTO-
SAN !!


BUT,
LOOK!

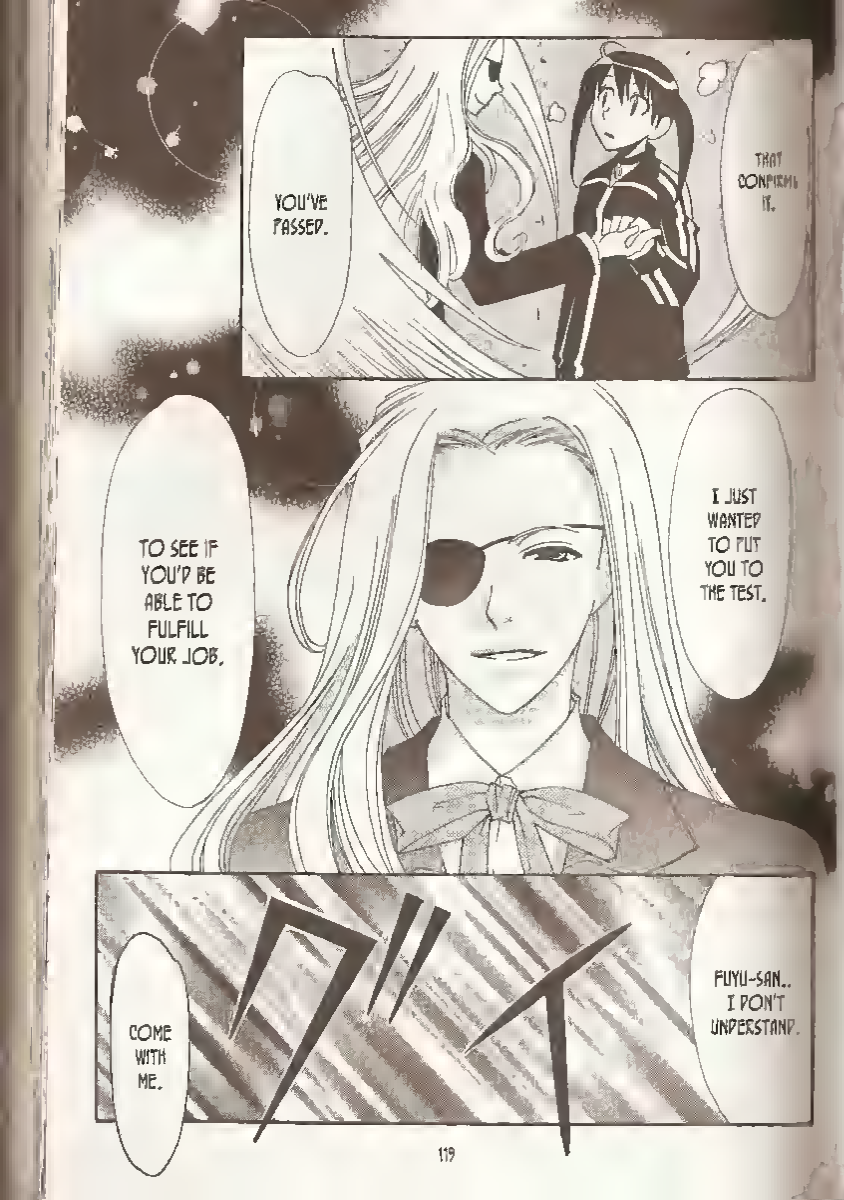
EVEN
THOUGH THE
CONNECTING
JOINTS ON HIS
BODY LOOK
JUST LIKE A
DOLL'S!
BLOOP!!

IT
LOOKS
LIKE A
DOLL'S...
IS THIS A
NECK-
AND-HEAD-
CONNECTING
JOINT?
HIS
HANDS
ARE
COLD.


IS TAKUTO-SAN...
...A
DOLL?

WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE BOTH OF US RIGHT NOW...
...WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
DO WE SCARE YOU?
SCARE ME?
I'D NEVER HAVE IMAGINED SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
THAT'S RIGHT
SEE, KOTOKO-CHAN?
AREN'T YOU AFRAID?
I...

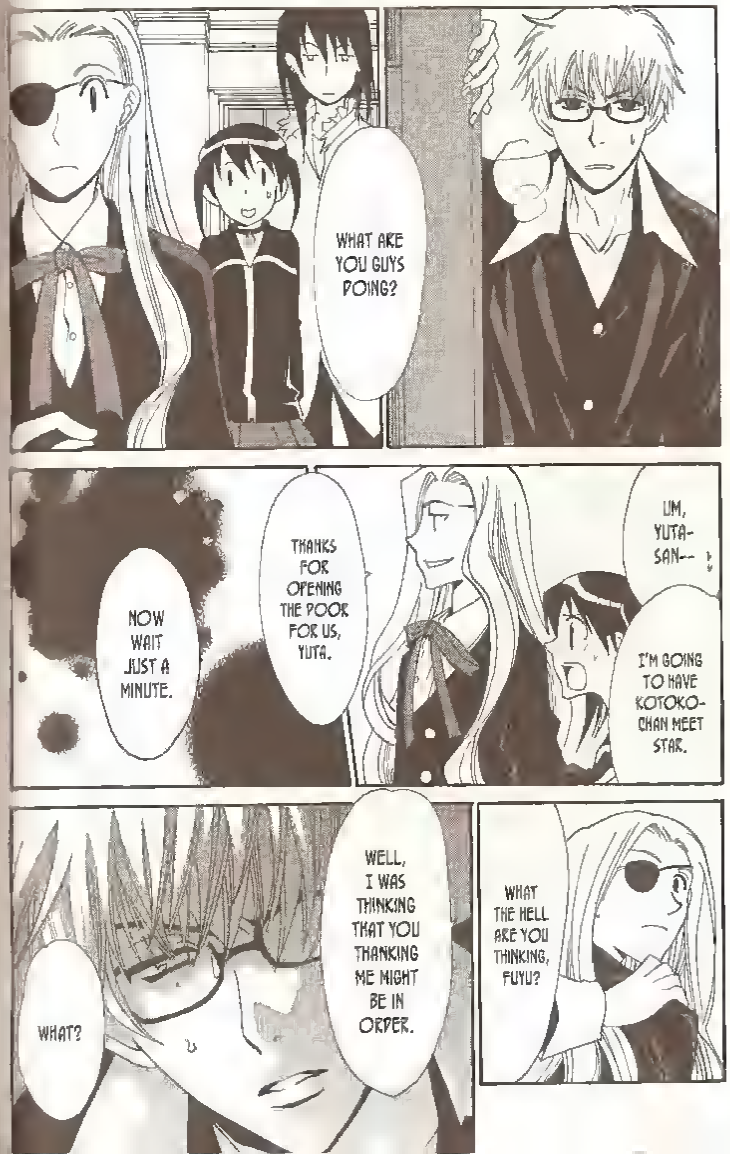
!!
I NEED TO STOP THOSE TWO RIGHT NOW!
STOP IT, TAKUTO-SAN! I DON'T WANT EITHER OF YOU GETTING HURT!
KOTOKO-CHAN...
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, FUYU-SAN? YOU WERE THE ONE WHO TOLD US TO FOLLOW.


YOU'VE PASSED.
THAT CONFIRMS IT.
TO SEE IF YOU'D BE ABLE TO FULFILL YOUR JOB.
I JUST WANTED TO PUT YOU TO THE TEST.
COME WITH ME.
FUYU-SAN.. I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

I WONDER WHY? I MEAN, I REALLY SHOULD BE SCARED RIGHT NOW.
I'M NOT AFRAID OF EITHER OF YOU.

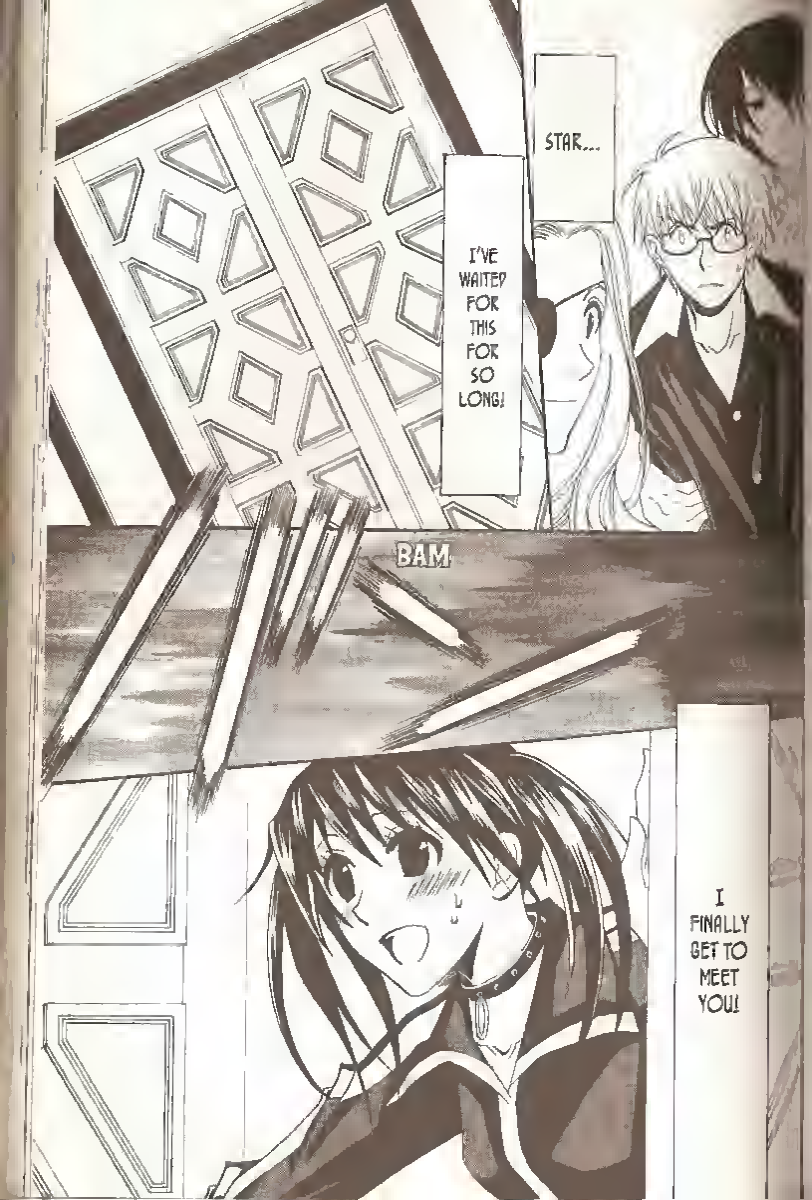
I'LL SHOW YOU STAR.
TO SEE STAR?
I GET TO FINALLY MEET...
...FOOL'S ULTIMATE MASTERPIECE!
I ONLY HAVE ONE GOAL
TO ENSURE SUCCESS, I WOULD HAVE DONE ANYTHING.
YEAH ...
I GUESS I'M NOT MYSELF RIGHT NOW.
?

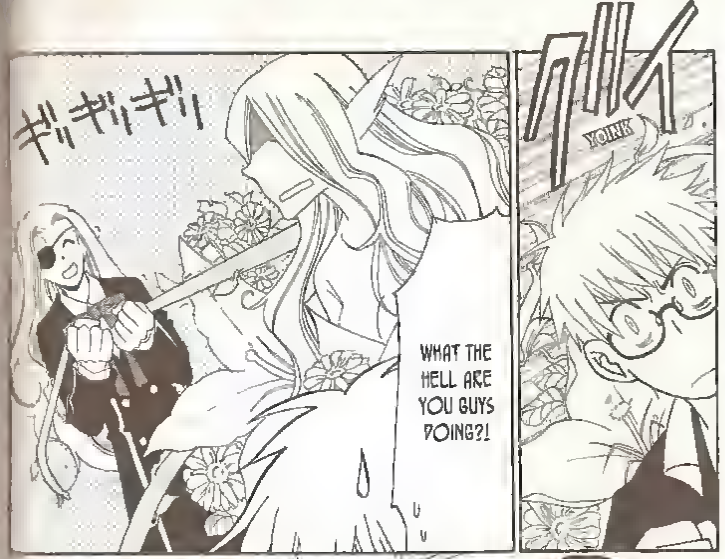
...IS BECAUSE YOU'RE OF TWO MINDS.
THE REAS WHY YOU'R NOT SHOWING STAR T KOTOKO.
I'M PUSHING HARD ON THIS BECAUSE I WANT OUR PLAN TO SUCCEED! YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING
WAIT A SEC! COME ON! OUT WITH IT! WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A PLAN?!
YOU GUYS ARE ALWAYS HIDING THINGS FROM ME!! TELL ME!
DON'T DO IT!!
ARE YOU EVEN LISTEN-ING TO ME?! FUYU-SAN!
LET'S GO, KOTOKO-CHAN.

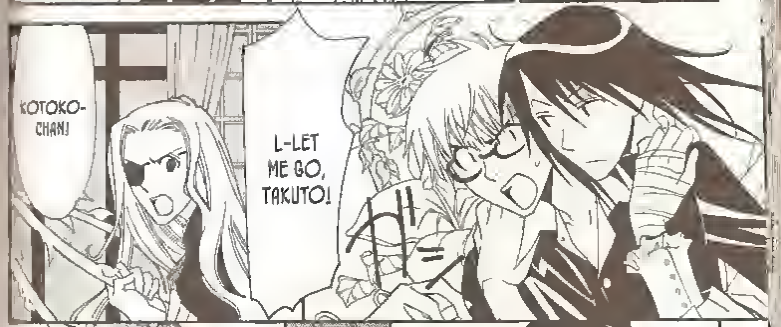

WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING?
NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE.
THANKS FOR OPENING THE DOOR FOR US, YUTA.
UM, YUTA-SAN--
I'M GOING TO HAVE KOTOKO-CHAN MEET STAR.
WHAT?
WELL, I WAS THINKING THAT YOU THANKING ME MIGHT BE IN ORDER.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU THINKING, FUYU?

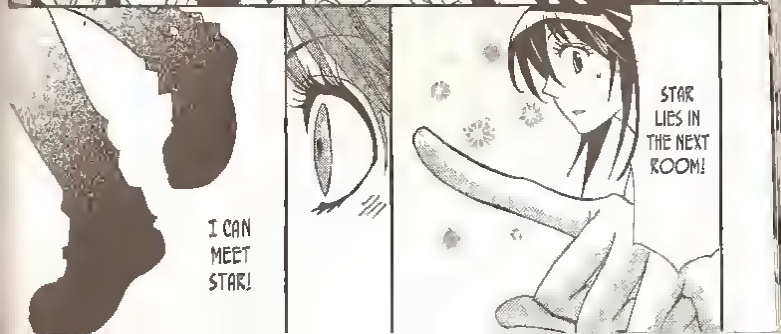
!!
I'M NOT LISTENING TO YOU!!
THAT'S AMAZING KOTOKO-CHAN!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DO THAT WITH YOUR ENCROACHER!
UNGH
WHY, YOU...
KOTOKO ...!

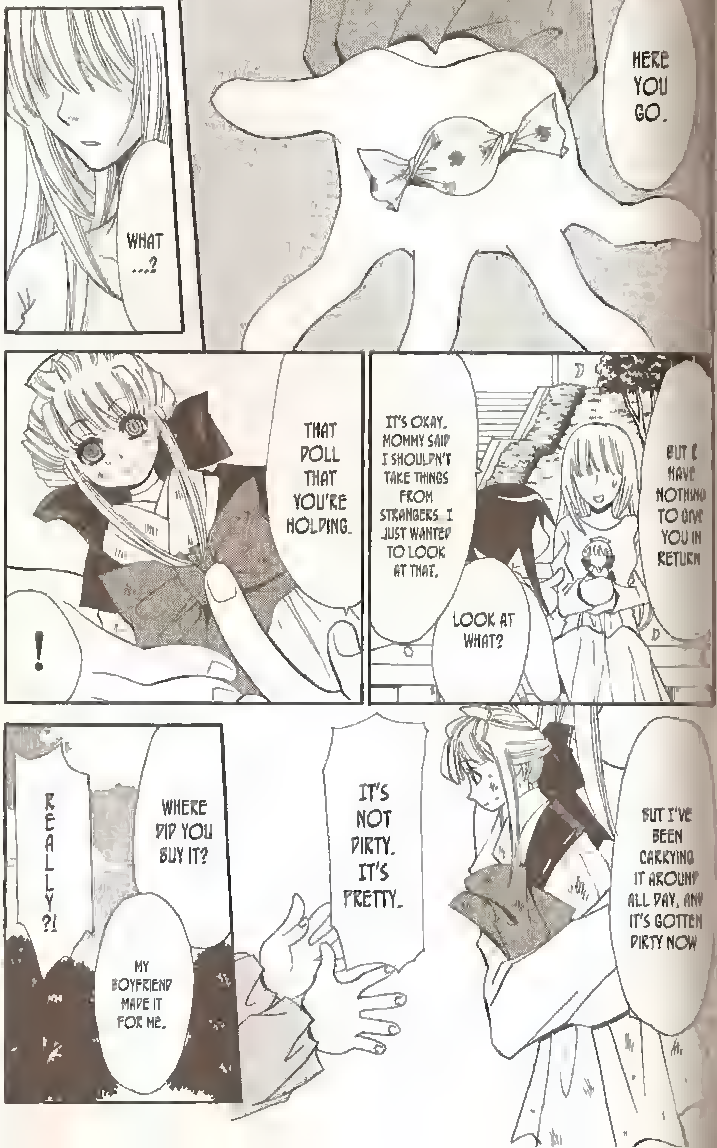
WHA ...?!
WHAT'S WITH HIM?
HE ALWAYS TELLS ME WHAT TO DO AND GIVES NO REASON.
I...
I REALLY DON'T WANT TO RESORT TO THIS.
DON'T ASK ANY QUESTIONS, KOTOKO NOW GO HOME
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR ENCROACHER?


STAR...
I'VE WAITED FOR THIS FOR SO LONG!
BAM
I FINALLY GET TO MEET YOU!


ギリギリ
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS DOING?!
YUKI

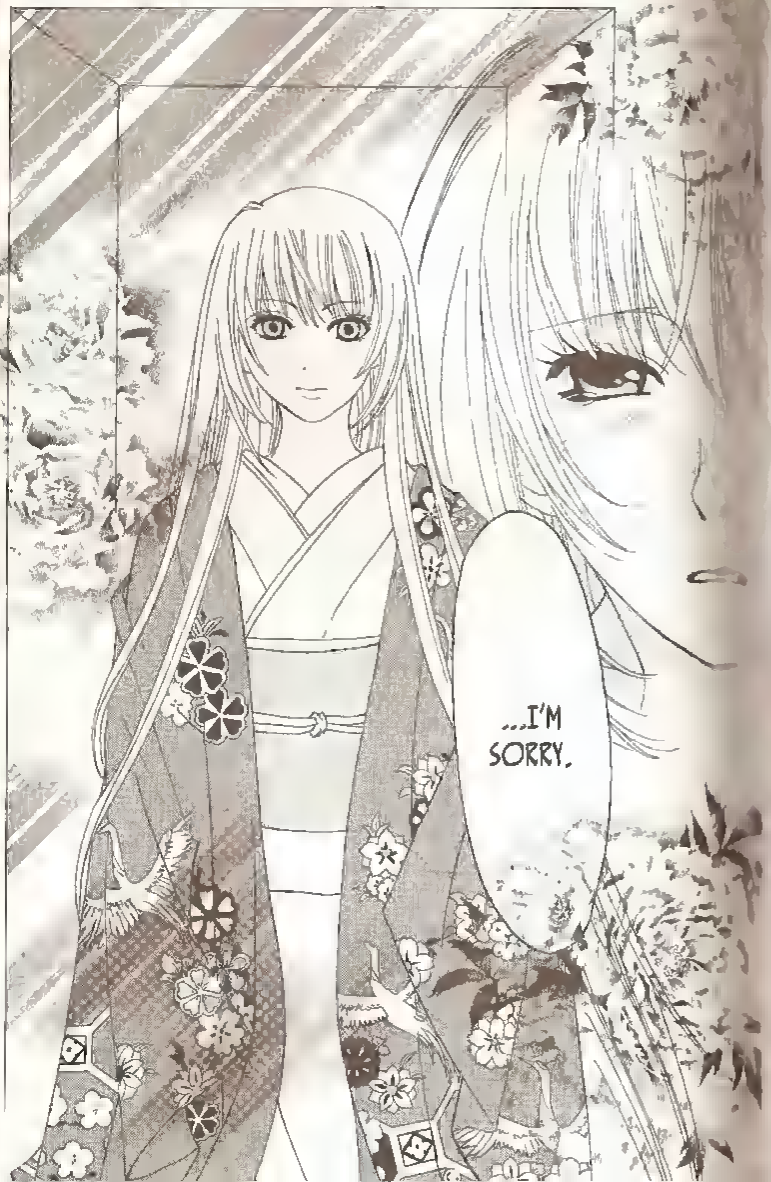

KOTOKO-CHAN!
L-LET ME GO, TAKUTO!


I CAN MEET STAR!
STAR LIES IN THE NEXT ROOM!

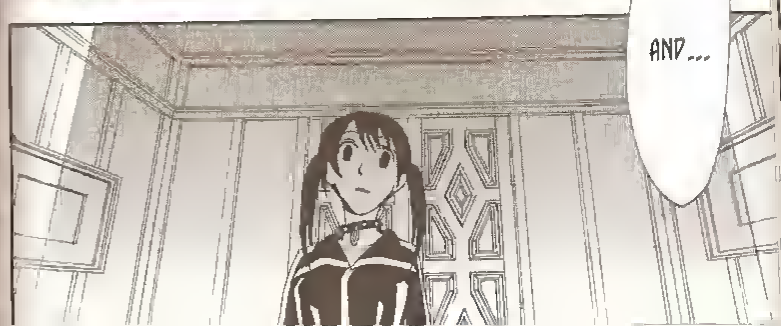

HERE YOU GO.
WHAT ...?
THAT DOLL THAT YOU'RE HOLDING.
!
IT'S OKAY. MOMMY SAID I SHOULDN'T TAKE THINGS FROM STRANGERS. I JUST WANTED TO LOOK AT THAT.
LOOK AT WHAT?
BUT I HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE YOU IN RETURN
REALLY?!
WHERE DID YOU BUY IT?
MY BOYFRIEND MADE IT FOR ME.
IT'S NOT DIRTY. IT'S PRETTY.
BUT I'VE BEEN CARRYING IT AROUND ALL DAY, AND IT'S GOTTEN DIRTY NOW

WHAT?
MISS! MISS!
UM I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING.
OH...
DO YOU HAVE A TUMMY ACHE?
YOU LOOK SICK.
I'M SITTING HERE TO REST FOR A BIT...
NO. I'M JUST TRYING TO FIND SOMETHING.

WOW. YOU'RE LUCKY
WHEN I GROW UP, I WANNA MAKE DOLLS.
YEP!
I LOVE IT! ♡
THAT DOLL...DO YOU REALLY LIKE IT?
I FINALLY FOUND YOU.
I'M SURE YOU'LL GET YOUR WISH.
REALLY?!
WHEN YOU GROW UP, I HOPE YOU LEARN HOW TO MAKE DOLLS FROM HIM.
IN EXCHANGE, I ASK YOU TO PLEASE SAVE HIM.
TAKE MY PLACE. YOU SEE, I'M GOING TO DISAPPEAR SOON.
PLEASE RELEASE HIM FROM THE CURSE.
MISS...?
PLEASE DON'T DISAPPEAR!
KOTOKO ... WILL HELP...


...I'M SORRY.

THANK YOU.


AND...

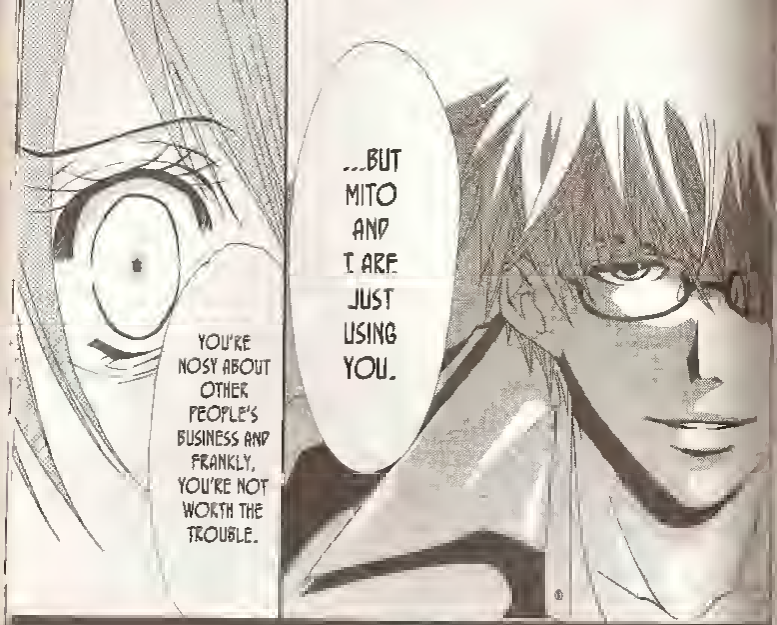
STAR IS PEOPLE'S "TRUE NATURE."
IT EXPOSES THE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS THAT WE HIDE DEEP WITHIN OURSELVES, AND NEVER REVEAL. NOT EVEN TO OURSELVES.
IT EXPOSED NOHARA'S JEALOUS FEELINGS TOWARD OTHER PEOPLE'S TALENTS.
IT EXPOSED EZAKI'S DOUBT AND DESPAIR OVER HIS OWN TALENT.
THE TRUTH CAUSES THOSE WHO SEE STAR TO BREAK DOWN.
OH, KOTOKO-CHAN...
.....
YUTA-SAN.
PSST
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO SEE HER.
WERE YOU THAT LADY'S...
...BOYFRIEND ...?
!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING ANYMORE
SO STAR SHOWED KOTOKO THE MOMENT WHEN SHE AND MITO MET
FWUMP
TAKUTO, BRING ME SOME COFFEE.
FUYU, BRING ME THE NOTEBOOK I KEEP IN THE DESK IN MY WORKSHOP.

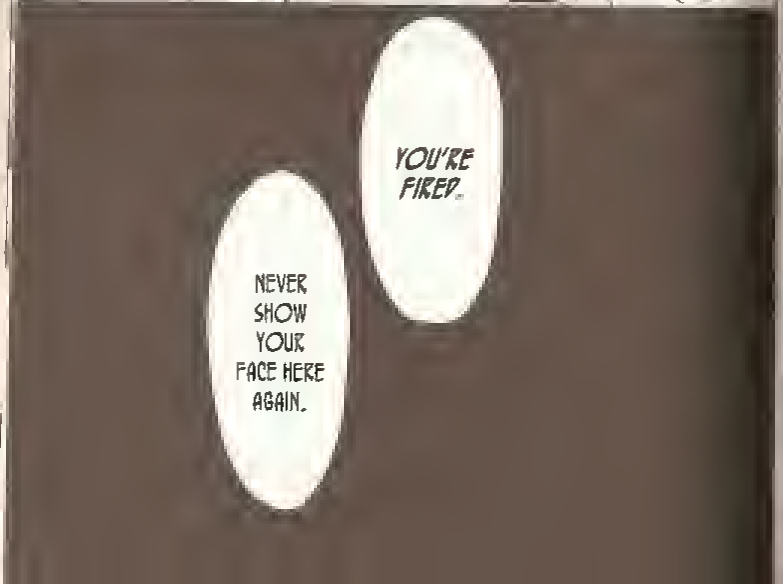
I'M ON IT.
HUH ...?
YUTA-SAN LOOKS TO BE IN SO MUCH PAIN.
...GETTING WORSE?
IS HIS CONDITION...
DO YOU KNOW THE "LEGEND OF THE FEATHERED ROBE"?
WHAT?
FUYU-SAN JUST ASKED ME ABOUT THE SAME PIECE OF FOLKLORE...
ISN'T IT ABOUT A MAN WHO FALLS IN LOVE WITH A HEAVENLY MAIDEN? AND THEN HE HIDES HER MAGICAL ROBE SO THAT THE MAIDEN CAN'T GO BACK TO HEAVEN AND THE MAN AND THE MAIDEN EVENTUALLY GET MARRIED. ?
THAT'S THE ONE.

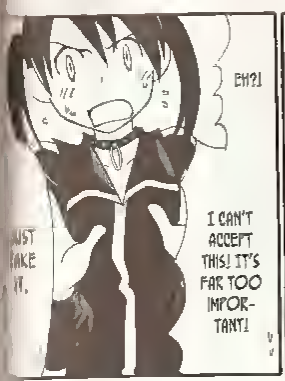
SO THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION OF WHETHER I WAS HER BOYFRIEND IS "YES."
I DID SOMETHING A LOT LIKE WHAT THE GUY IN THE LEGEND DID TO THE HEAVENLY MAIDEN.
SO THAT LEGEND IS TRUE?!
WHAT? SO THAT MEANS...
WHAT?!! YOU'RE MARRIED?!!
SHE'S LONG DEAD, THOUGH.
OH...
THE LADY YOU MET A LONG TIME AGO WAS NAMED MITO...
...AND SHE WAS A HEAVENLY MAIDEN.
SHE PASSED AWAY.

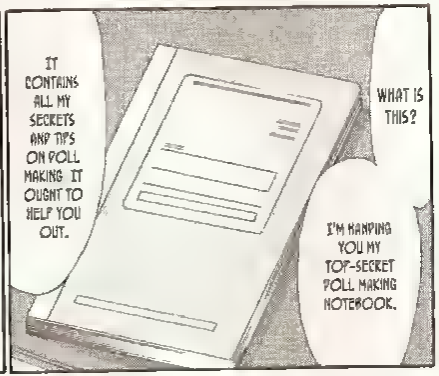
CELESTIAL BEINGS AND HUMANS COEXIST ON EARTH TODAY...
...BUT IN THE PAST, THEY WERE ONLY ABLE TO DESCEND TO EARTH ONCE A YEAR.
THAT WAS WHEN I MET MITO.
YUTA-SAN...
HE MUST HAVE REALLY LOVED MITO-SAN.
INSTEAD OF A FEATHERED ROBE, CELESTIAL BEINGS USED ENCROACHERS TO EXTRACT ATTRACTIONS AND FOR ANYTHING ELSE.
SO THAT POLL'S MODEL WAS MITO-SAN.

...ARE PUT UNDER A SEVERE CURSE.
FOR A HUMAN AND HEAVENLY BEING TO MARRY IS FORBIDDEN, AND THOSE WHO DEFY THE LAW...
FOR DIFFERENT RACES TO INTERMINGLE ...
THAT'S WHY HUMANS WERE ESSENTIAL ENERGY SOURCES FOR CELESTIAL BEINGS.
AND RANDOM ... THE EXTRACTED ATTRACTIONS THE ENCROACHERS GREW AND DEVELOPED THEIR POWERS.
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?
COME TO THINK OF IT, MITO-SAN DID MENTION SOMETHING ABOUT A "CURSE."
CURSE? SO POLL'S THAT MEAN
1/14
YUTA-SAN! WHAT'S ALL THIS YOU WERE SAYING ABOUT A CURSE?
!
IS THIS THE NOTE-BOOK?
YEAH, THANKS.
CLACK
YUTA!


YOU'RE NOSY ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS AND FRANKLY, YOU'RE NOT WORTH THE TROUBLE.
...BUT MITO AND I ARE JUST USING YOU.


YOU'RE FIRED.
NEVER SHOW YOUR FACE HERE AGAIN.


EH?!
I CAN'T ACCEPT THIS! IT'S FAR TOO IMPOR-TANT!
JUST TAKE IT.

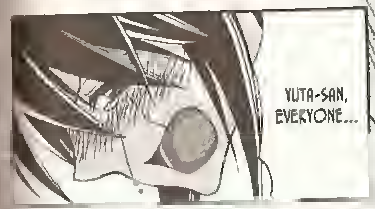

WHAT IS THIS?
I'M HANDING YOU MY TOP-SECRET POLL MAKING NOTEBOOK.
IT CONTAINS ALL MY SECRETS AND TIPS ON POLL MAKING. IT OUGHT TO HELP YOU OUT.

HUH?
THINK OF IT...AS A PARTING GIFT.

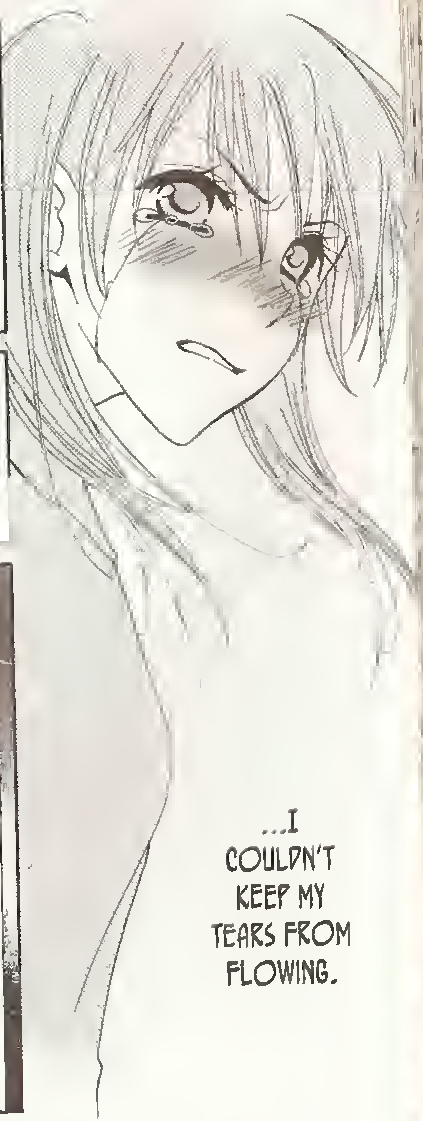
YU... YUTA-SAN...
AND I DON'T THINK YOU REALIZE THIS YET...
ON TOP OF THAT, YOU CHALLENGE ME TIME AND AGAIN.
YOU'RE A CLUMSY POLL MAKER, AND YOU NEVER FOLLOW ANY OF MY INSTRUCTIONS.
YUTA?!

I DIDN'T KNOW
MAYBE BECAUSE I WAS FRUSTRATED BY YUTA-SAN'S WORDS...
...OR BECAUSE I WAS ANGRY, OR SADDENED BY THEM...
...WHAT-EVER THE CASE...
WAIT, KOTOKO-CHAN...!
YUTA...
I NEED A CIGARETTE...
!

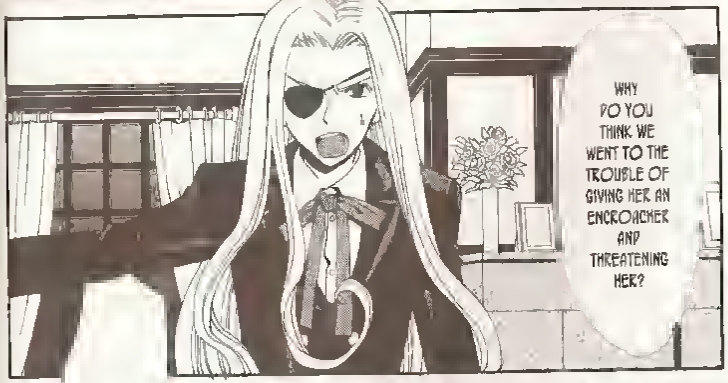
I HATE YOU!!

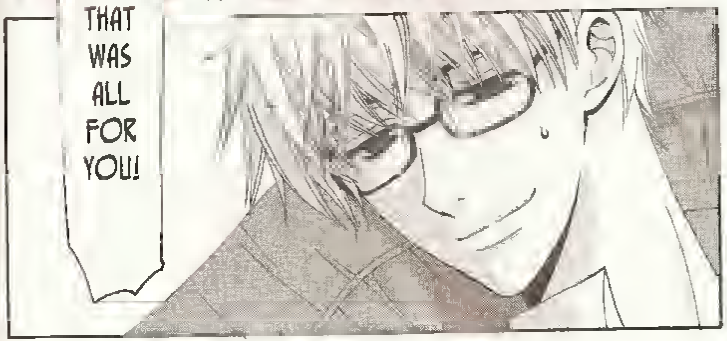

YUTA-SAN, EVERYONE...

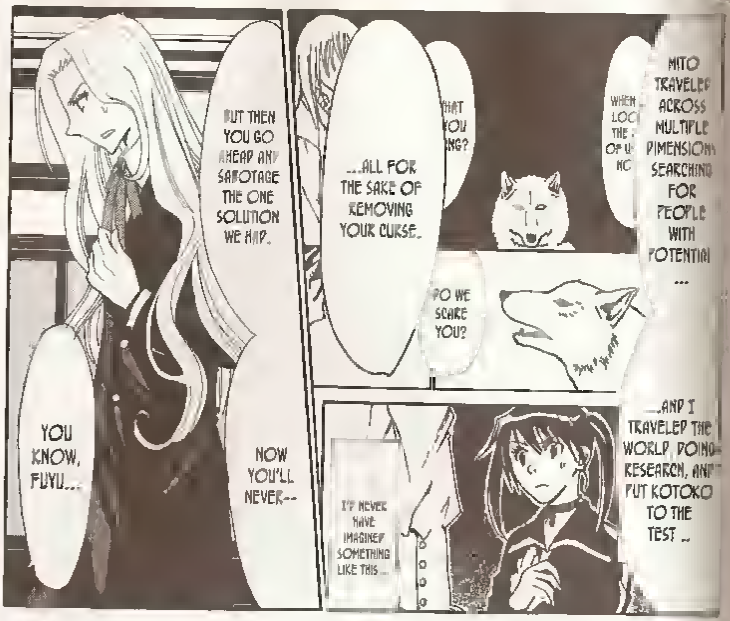
I HATE YOU ALL!!
I WANTED TO CURSE EVERYTHING.


...I COULDN'T KEEP MY TEARS FROM FLOWING.

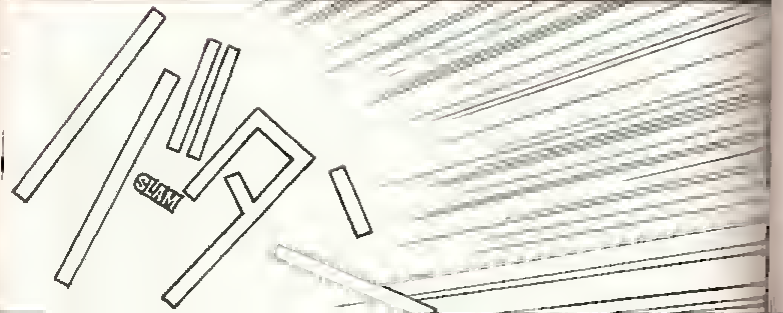
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU JUST DID?!

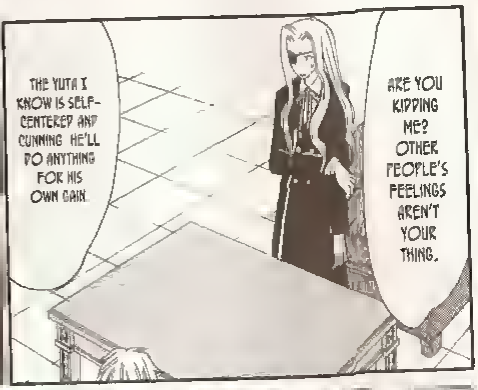

WHY DO YOU THINK WE WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF GIVING HER AN ENCROACHER AND THREATENING HER?

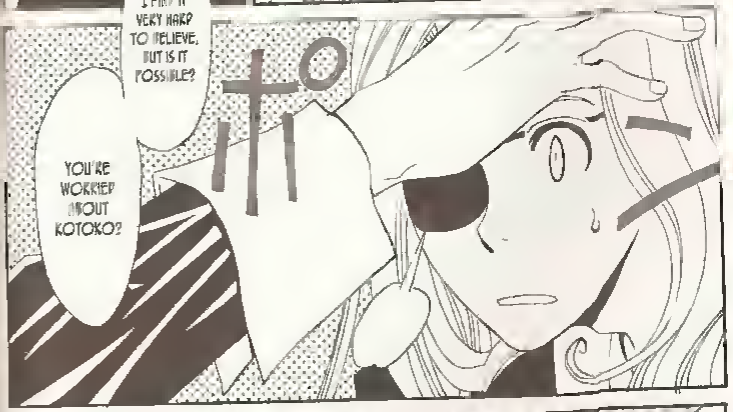

THAT WAS ALL FOR YOU!

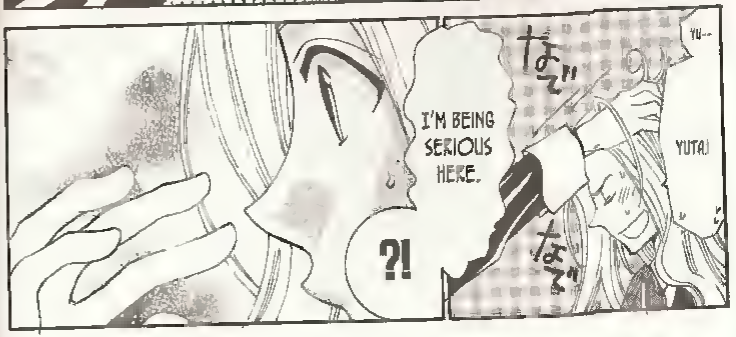

BUT THEN YOU GO AHEAD AND SABOTAGE THE ONE SOLUTION WE HAD.
YOU KNOW, FUYU...
NOW YOU'LL NEVER--
...ALL FOR THE SAKE OF REMOVING YOUR CURSE.
DO WE SCARE YOU?
MITO TRAVELED ACROSS MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE WITH POTENTIAL ...
I'D NEVER HAVE IMAGINED SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
...AND I TRAVELED THE WORLD, DOING RESEARCH, AND PUT KOTOKO TO THE TEST ..

DID YOU EVER STOP TO THINK ABOUT KOTOKO'S FEELINGS?
WHA...


SLAM

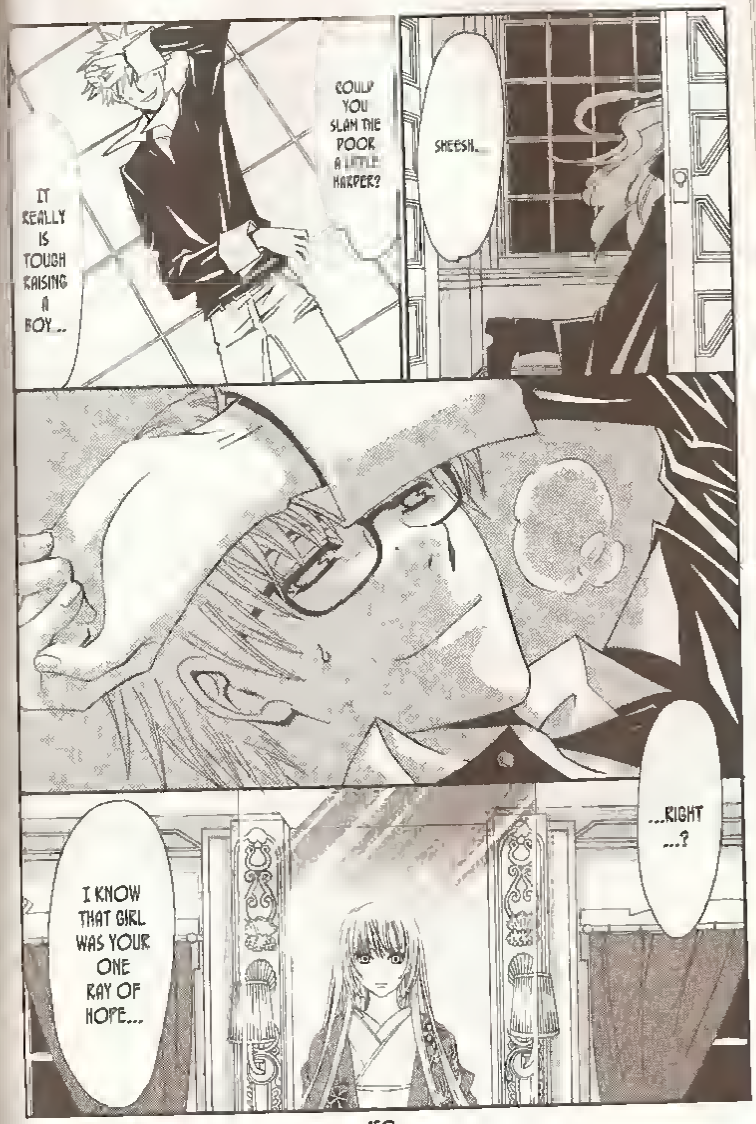

THE YUTA I KNOW IS SELF-CENTERED AND CUNNING. HE'LL DO ANYTHING FOR HIS OWN GAIN.
ARE YOU KIDDING ME? OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS AREN'T YOUR THING.

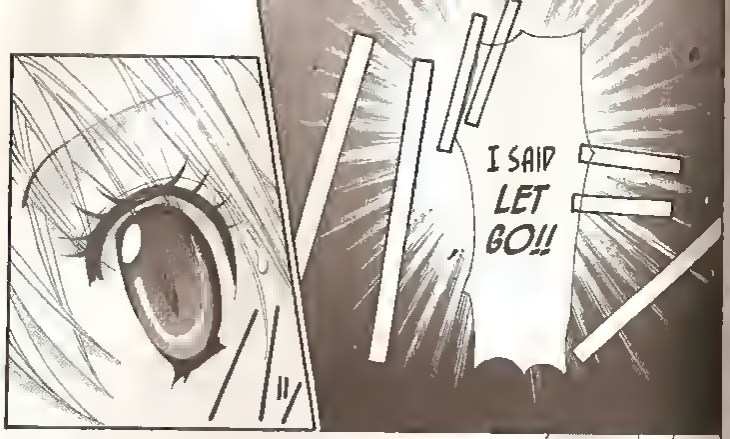

I FIND IT VERY HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT IS IT POSSIBLE?
YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT KOTOKO?


YU--
なぜ!!
YUTA!
I'M BEING SERIOUS HERE.
?!
なぜ

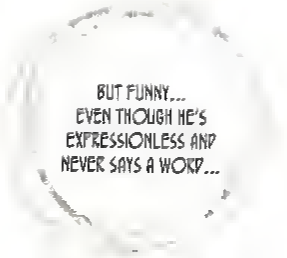
...BUT SHE TURNED OUT TO BE A SETBACK FOR ME.
MITO...

I HATE THEM...

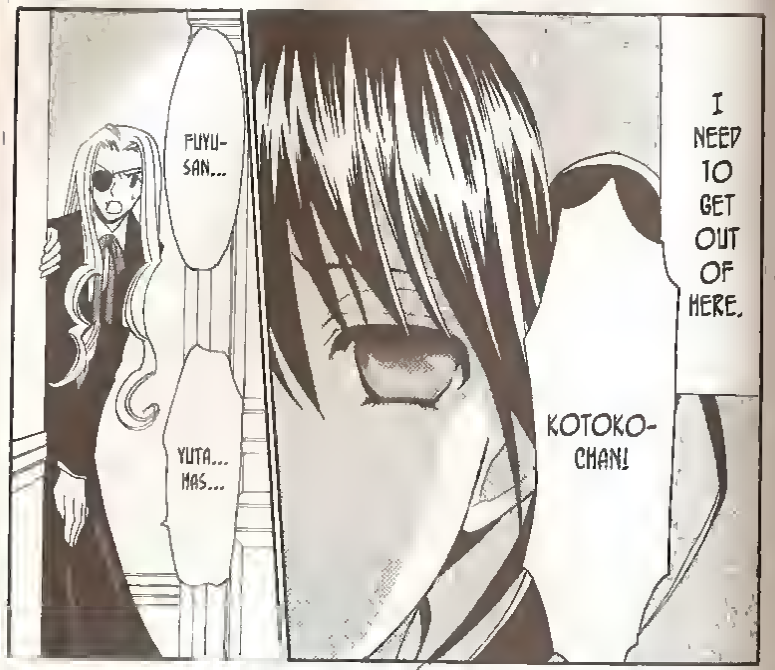

IT REALLY IS TOUGH RAISING A BOY...
COULD YOU SLAM THE DOOR A LITTLE HARDER?
SHEESH...
I KNOW THAT GIRL WAS YOUR ONE RAY OF HOPE...
...RIGHT ...?


I SAID LET GO!!

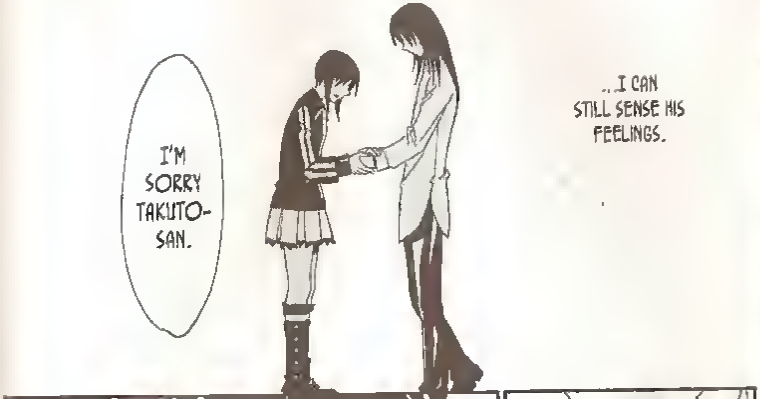
TAKUTO-SAN.
WHAT AM I DOING? TAKUTO-SAN'S NOT TO BLAME.
I-I'M SORRY...
HE'S STILL AS EXPRESSIONLESS AS EVER


BUT FUNNY... EVEN THOUGH HE'S EXPRESSIONLESS AND NEVER SAYS A WORD...

I HATE ALL OF THEM!
LET ME GO, TAKUTO-SAN...
PLEASE LET ME GO.
I WANT TO GO HOME! SO LET ME GO!
I DON'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED ANYMORE.

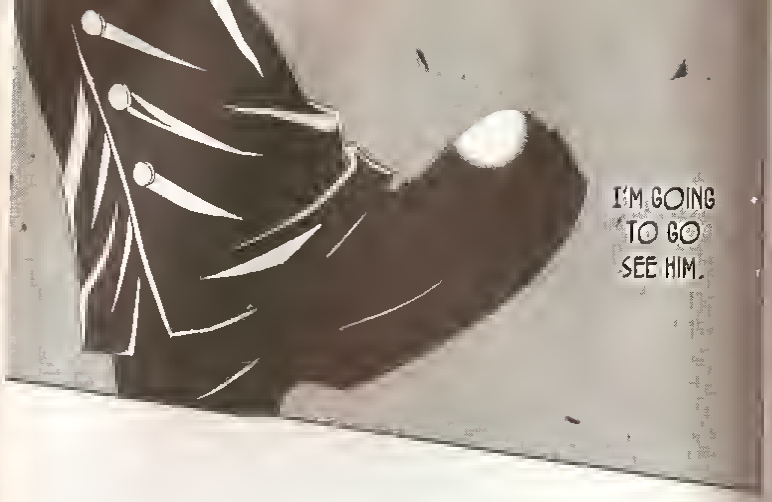

I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.
KOTOKO-CHAN!
FUYU-SAN...
YUTA... HAS...

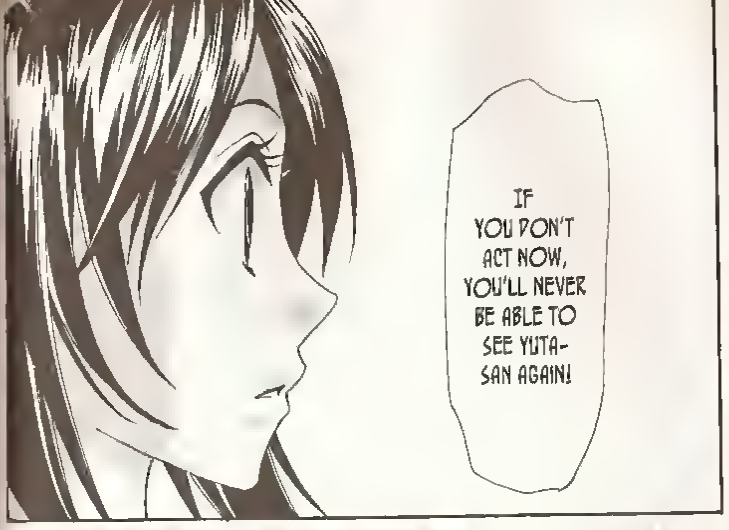
YUTA HAS COLLAPSED...
PLEASE HELP HIM, KOTOKO-CHAN!
IF WE DO NOTHING, YUTA WILL BE TRAPPED FOREVER IN THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF THE CURSE.


I'M SORRY TAKUTO-SAN.
..I CAN STILL SENSE HIS FEELINGS.

I'M REALLY SORRY, TAKUTO-SAN. I CAN'T DO WHAT YOU WANT ME TO.
.....
I'M SORRY...

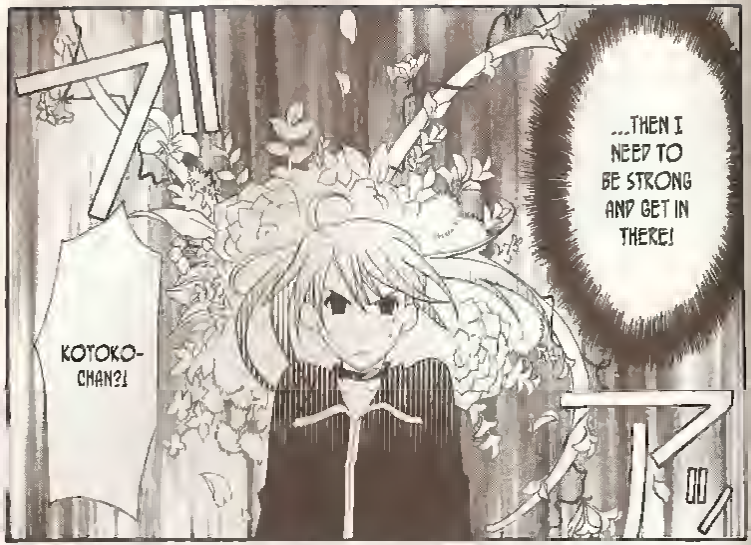
I CAN FREE MYSELF FROM HIS GRASP AND FLEE.
TA-KUTO-SAN SEEMS TO HAVE LET HIS GUARD DOWN.
...I CAN'T GO BACK TO HIS PLACE.
AFTER YUTA-SAN SAID ALL THOSE MEAN THINGS...

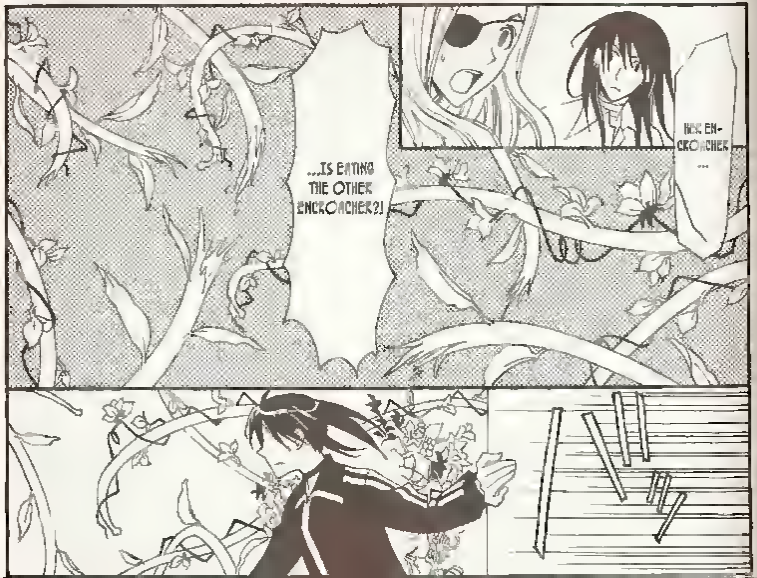


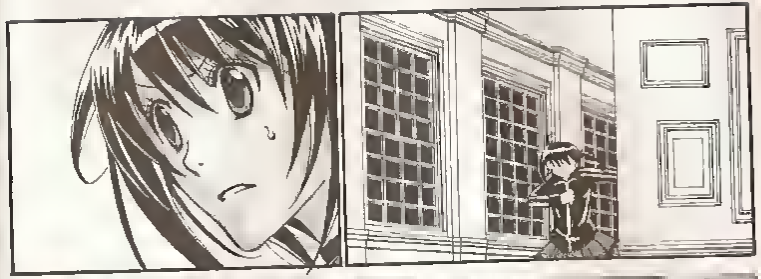


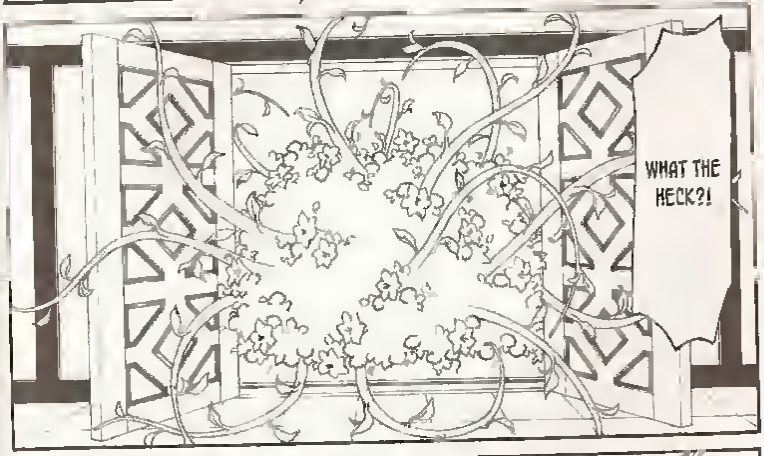
BECAUSE I DON'T WANT...

...TO NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN...!

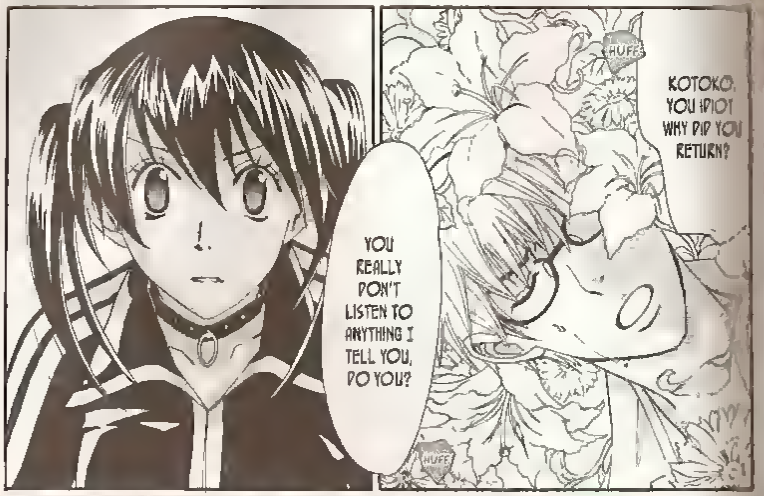

KOTOKO-CHAN?!
...THEN I NEED TO BE STRONG AND GET IN THERE!


...IS EATING THE OTHER ENCROACHER?!
HOE EN-CROACHER ...

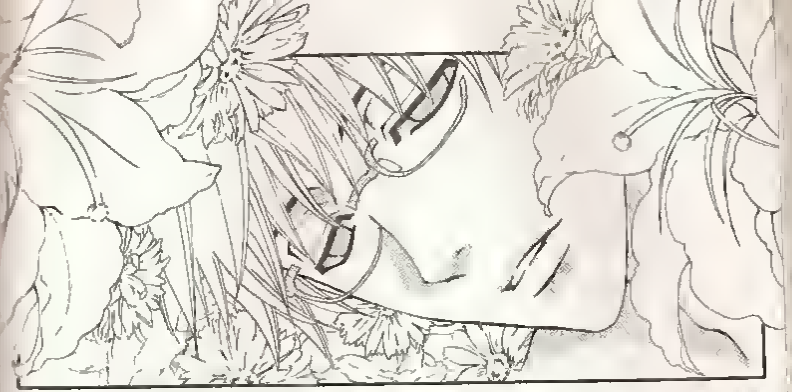


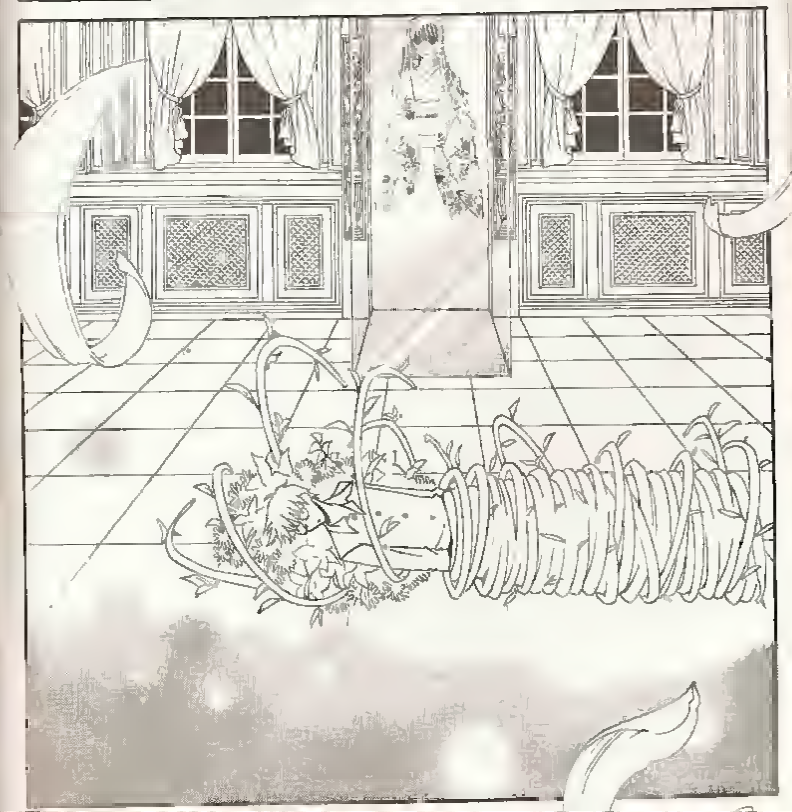

WHAT THE HECK?!

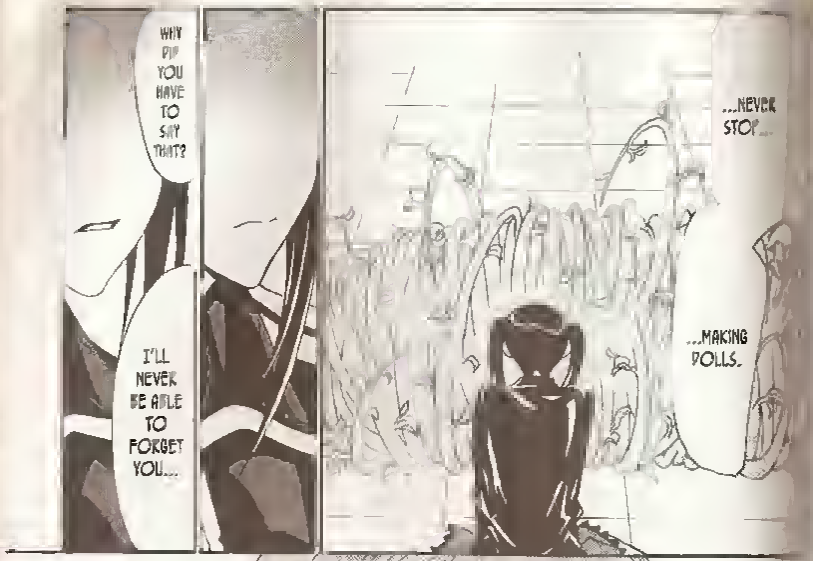
THIS IS THE CURSE THAT BINDS YUTA.
EVEN THOUGH YUTA LIES INSIDE THIS ROOM...
...HE'S BEYOND OUR REACH.
IF YUTA-SAN IS INSIDE...


HUFF
KOTOKO, YOU IDIOT! WHY DID YOU RETURN?
HUFF
YOU REALLY DON'T LISTEN TO ANYTHING I TELL YOU, DO YOU?

KOTOKO ...
!
YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN SAFE IF YOU LEFT THIS MANSION...
OH NO!
WHAT IS THIS?
...AND I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANY REGRETS.
IT WON'T BURGE!





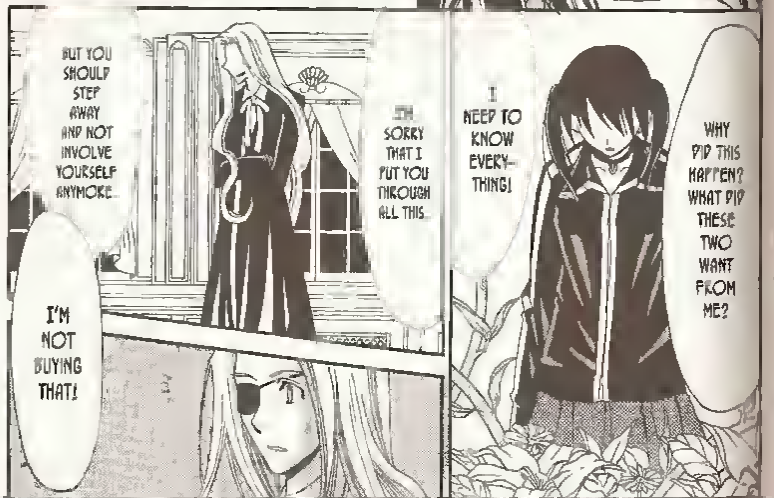

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SAY THAT?
I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FORGET YOU...
...NEVER STOP...
...MAKING DOLLS.

FORGET ABOUT ME.

...SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT...!
ESPECIALLY IF YOU KEEP...

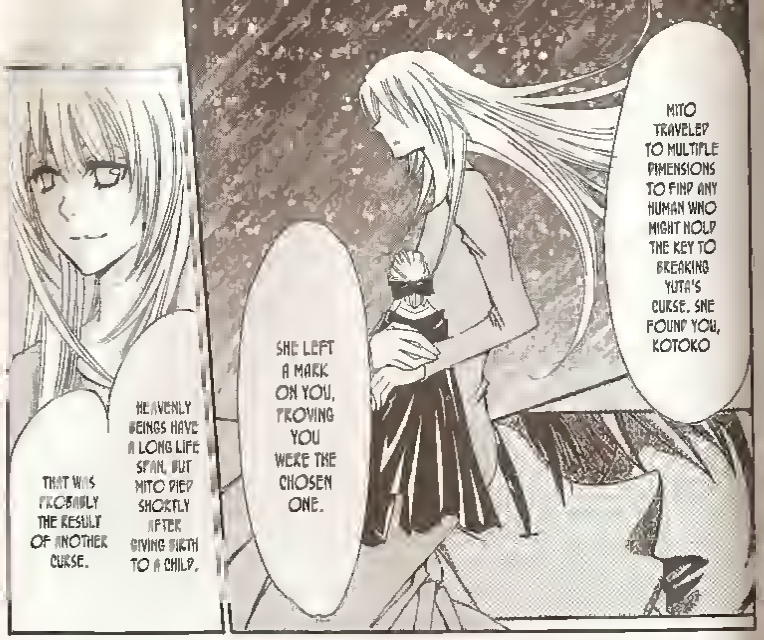
AND...
SLITHER
SLITHER

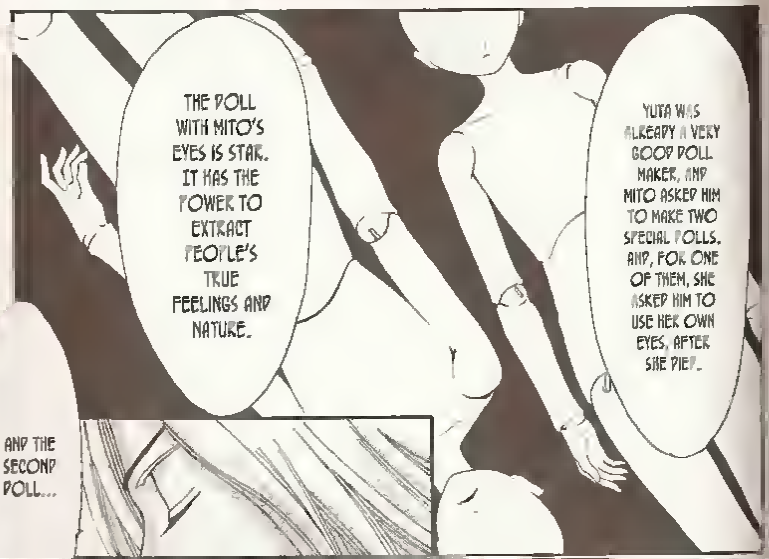
NO TIME EXISTS INSIDE YUTA.
THIS WAS WHAT HE WAS CURSED WITH... BECAUSE HE MARRIED A HEAVENLY BEING.


I'M SORRY THAT I PUT YOU THROUGH ALL THIS...
BUT YOU SHOULD STEP AWAY AND NOT INVOLVE YOURSELF ANYMORE...
I'M NOT BUYING THAT!
I NEED TO KNOW EVERY-THING!
WHY DID THIS HAPPEN? WHAT DID THESE TWO WANT FROM ME?

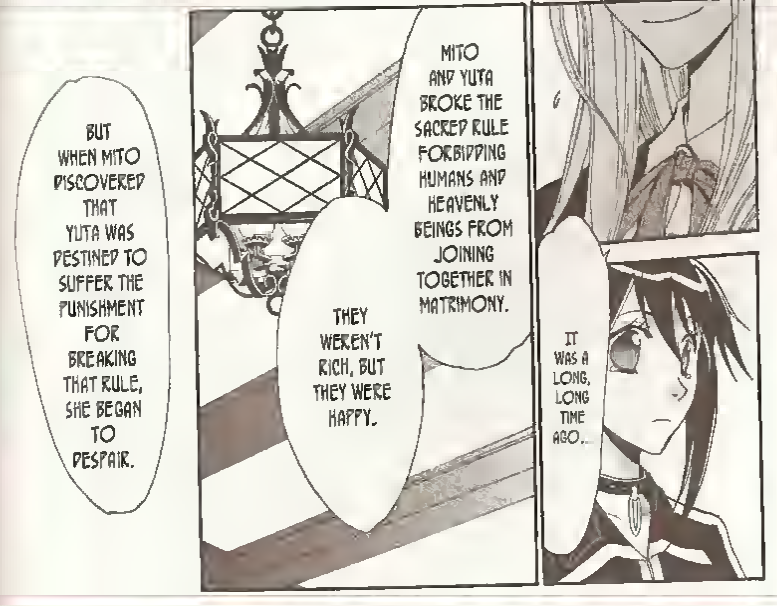
YUTA-SAN!!
LET YUTA-SAN GO!!
PLEASE!

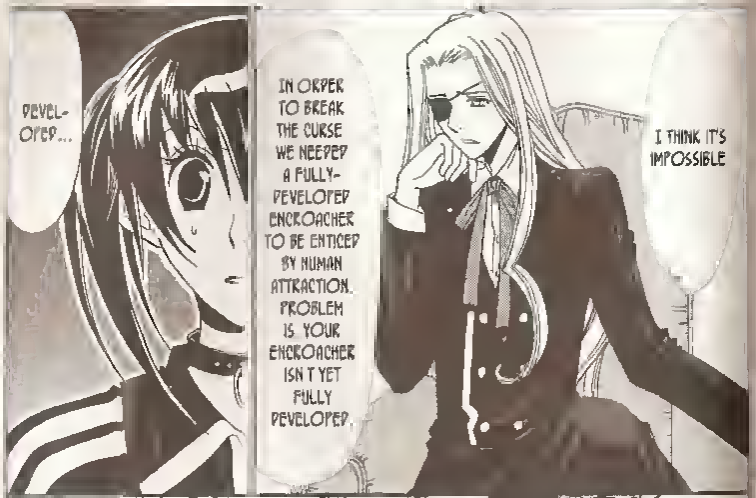
HE WILL NOT AGE, AND WILL NEVER DIE.
WHILE HE'S GOT THE POWER TO MANIPULATE TIME, HE CAN'T USE THAT POWER ON HIMSELF.
YUTA WILL SLEEP INSIDE THAT FOR 70 YEARS NOW.
SLEEP FOR 70 YEARS?
WHAT ?!


MITO TRAVELED TO MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS TO FIND ANY HUMAN WHO MIGHT HOLD THE KEY TO BREAKING YUTA'S CURSE. SHE FOUND YOU, KOTOKO
SHE LEFT A MARK ON YOU, PROVING YOU WERE THE CHOSEN ONE.
HEAVENLY BEINGS HAVE A LONG LIFE SPAN, BUT MITO DIED SHORTLY AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO A CHILD.
THAT WAS PROBABLY THE RESULT OF ANOTHER CURSE.

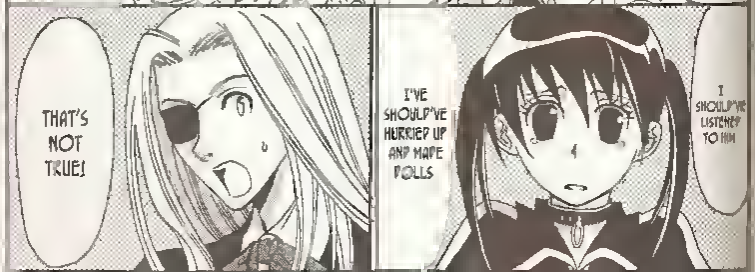

THE DOLL WITH MITO'S EYES IS STAR. IT HAS THE POWER TO EXTRACT PEOPLE'S TRUE FEELINGS AND NATURE.
YUTA WAS ALREADY A VERY GOOD DOLL MAKER, AND MITO ASKED HIM TO MAKE TWO SPECIAL DOLLS. AND, FOR ONE OF THEM, SHE ASKED HIM TO USE HER OWN EYES, AFTER SHE DIED.
AND THE SECOND DOLL...

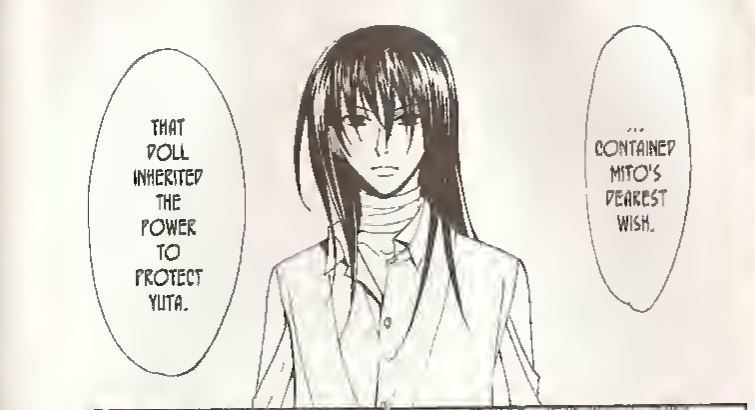
KOTOKO-CHAN...
I'VE GOT THE RIGHT TO KNOW EVERY-THING!
HE TOOK ME TO HIS OFFICE...
.. AND I'VE BEEN NOTHING IF NOT DEEPLY INVOLVED EVER SINCE THAT DAY WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL AND MET THAT WOMAN!

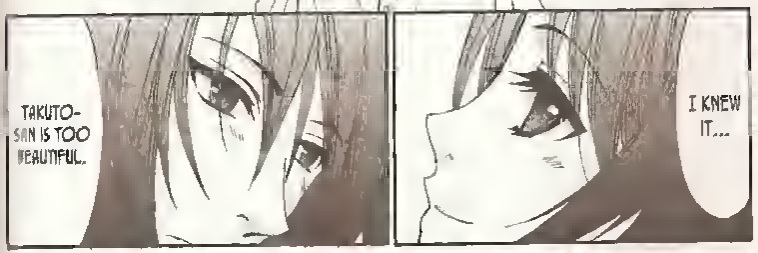

BUT WHEN MITO DISCOVERED THAT YUTA WAS DESTINED TO SUFFER THE PUNISHMENT FOR BREAKING THAT RULE, SHE BEGAN TO DESPAIR.
THEY WEREN'T RICH, BUT THEY WERE HAPPY.
MITO AND YUTA BROKE THE SACRED RULE FORBIDDING HUMANS AND HEAVENLY BEINGS FROM JOINING TOGETHER IN MATRIMONY.
IT WAS A LONG, LONG TIME AGO...

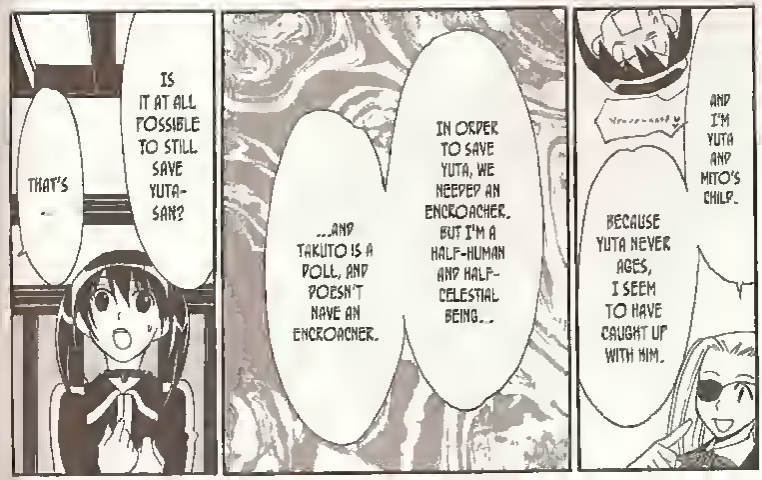

DEVELOPED...
IN ORDER TO BREAK THE CURSE WE NEEDED A FULLY-DEVELOPED ENCROACHER TO BE ENTICED BY HUMAN ATTRACTION. PROBLEM IS, YOUR ENCROACHER ISN'T YET FULLY DEVELOPED.
I THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE

THAT'S ALL I FOUND FROM MY RESEARCH, AND I'M NOT SURE WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENS.
IT SEEMS ONLY A FULLY-DEVELOPED ENCROACHER HAS AN EFFECT ON A CURSE ENCROACHER.


THAT'S NOT TRUE!
I'VE SHOULD'VE HURRIED UP AND MADE DOLLS
I SHOULD'VE LISTENED TO HIM

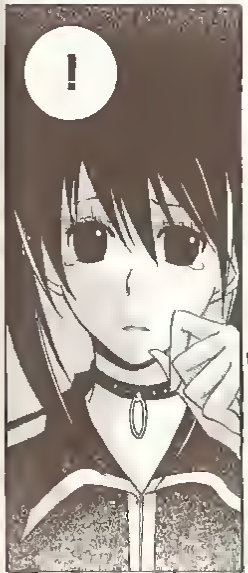

THAT DOLL INHERITED THE POWER TO PROTECT YUTA.
...CONTAINED MITO'S DEAREST WISH.


TAKUTO-SAN IS TOO BEAUTIFUL.
I KNEW IT...


THAT'S...
IS IT AT ALL POSSIBLE TO STILL SAVE YUTA-SAN?
...AND TAKUTO IS A DOLL, AND DOESN'T HAVE AN ENCROACHER.
IN ORDER TO SAVE YUTA, WE NEEDED AN ENCROACHER. BUT I'M A HALF-HUMAN AND HALF-CELESTIAL BEING...
AND I'M YUTA AND MITO'S CHILD.
BECAUSE YUTA NEVER AGES, I SEEM TO HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.

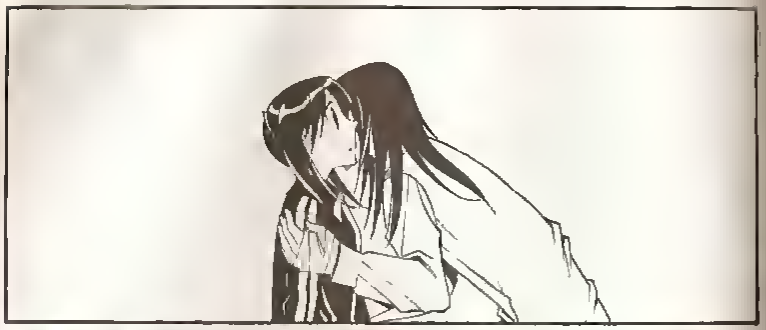
FAKUTO-SAN?
WHAT'S GOING ON? HE'S HOLDING MY HAND.

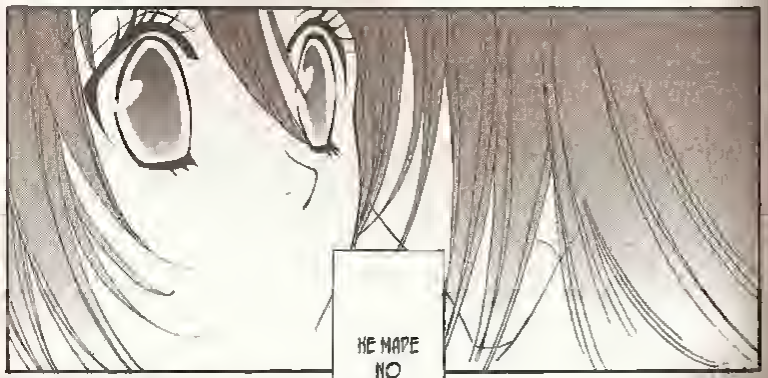
PROB-ABLY...
I JUST CAN'T THINK THAT FAR AHEAD IN THE FUTURE..
IT-IT'S OKAY! WE'LL GET THE PIECES IN PLACE NEXT TIME..
BUT BY THE TIME THE CURSE IS FINISHED I'LL BE OVER 80 YEARS O..!.
THE EFFECTS OF THE CURSE SIMPLY APPEARED EARLY, BUT BECAUSE THEY APPEARED EARLY, HE MIGHT WAKE UP EARLIER TOO! WE CAN HOPE CAN'T WE?

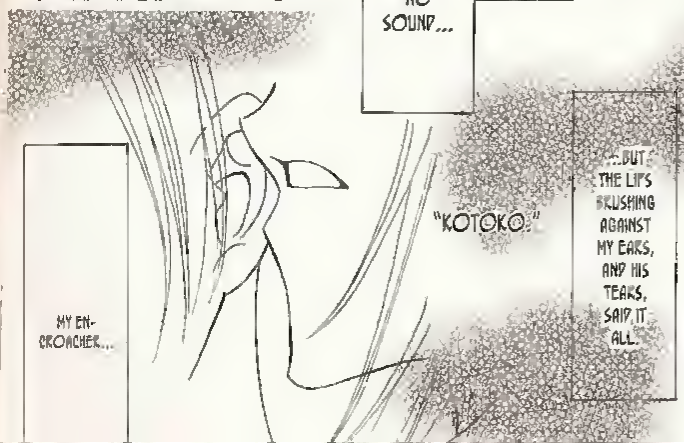

!

I WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN, YUTA-SAN..
HIM

ISN'T THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO RIGHT NOW?
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF I CAN LIVE ANOTHER 70 YEARS...

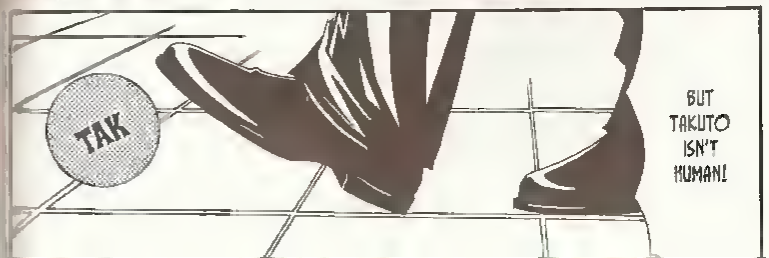



HE MADE NO SOUND...


MY EN-CROACHER...
"KOTOKO."
...BUT THE LIPS BRUSHING AGAINST MY EARS, AND HIS TEARS, SAID IT ALL.

WHAT?! HOW?
THE ENCROACHER RESPONDED TO TAKUTO-SAN!!
HOW?!

?!

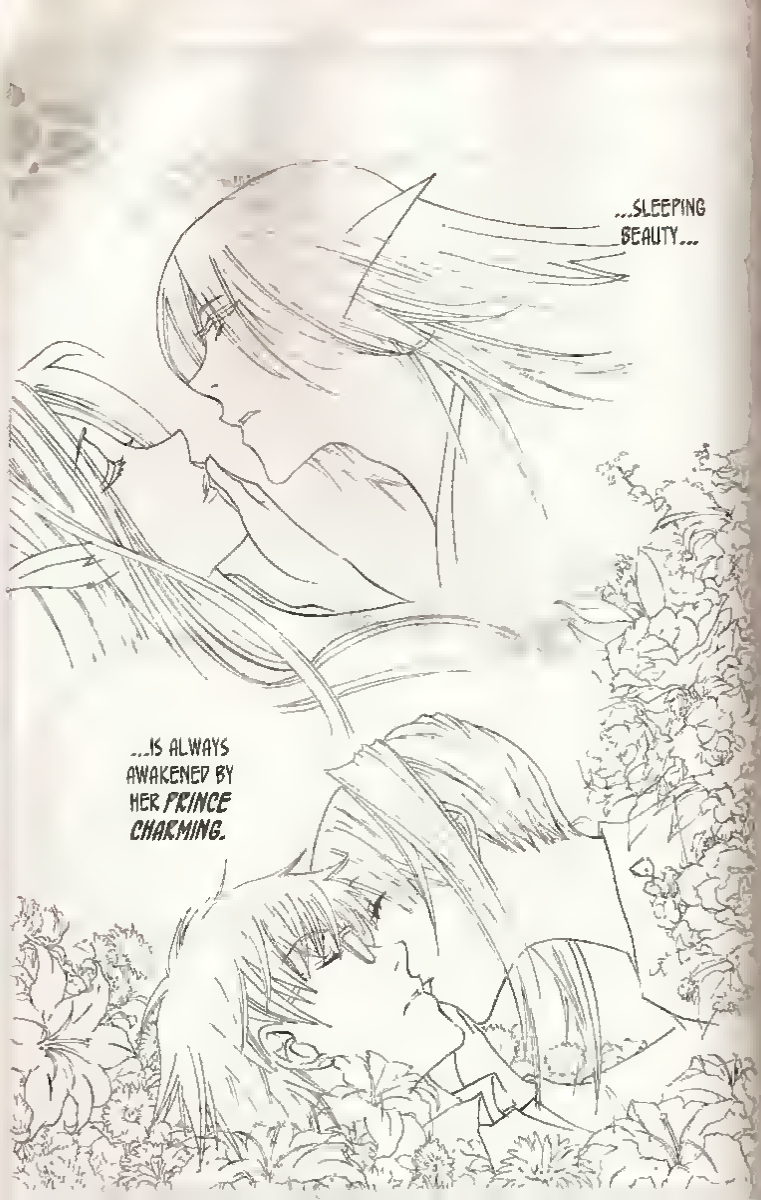

TAK
BUT TAKUTO ISN'T HUMAN!

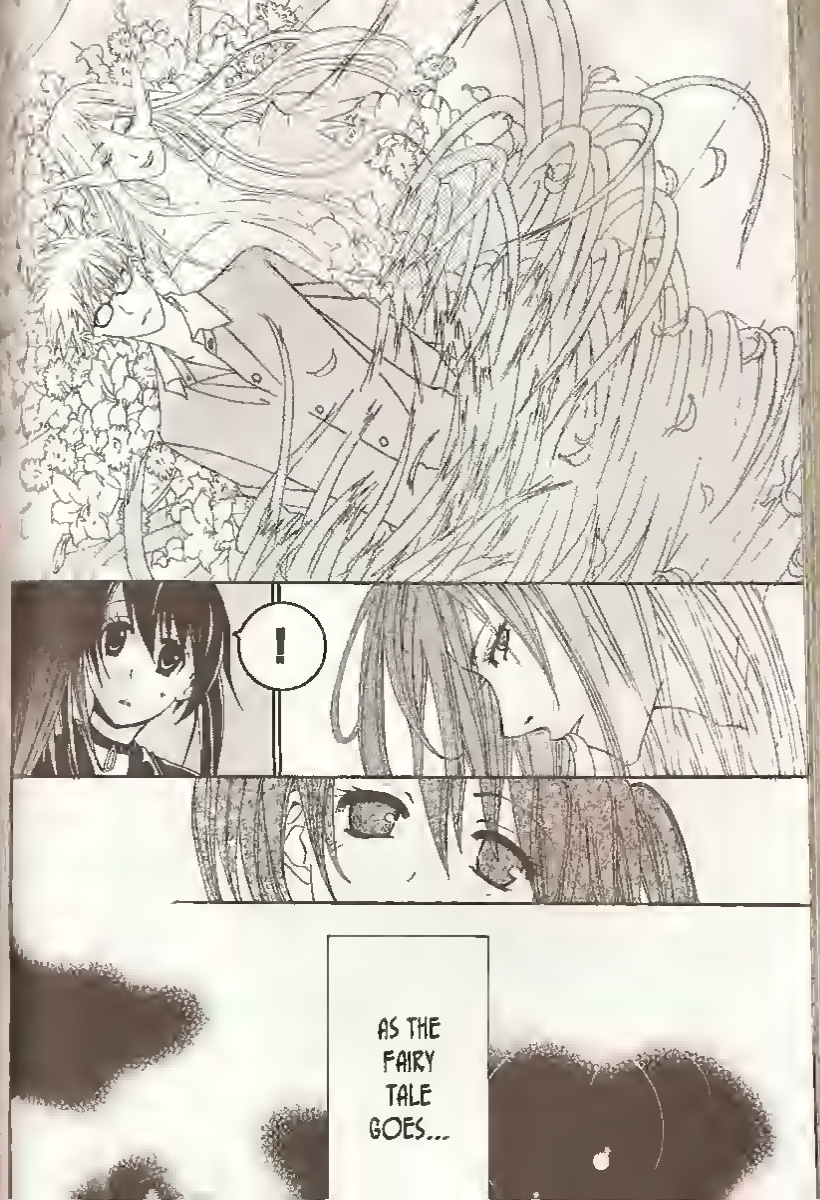
WHAT?
WHY?
NO...
WHY WOULD TAKUTO-SAN BREAK?
NO, THIS CAN'T BE REAL!
K--
KOTOKO-CHAN!
LOOK BEHIND YOU!

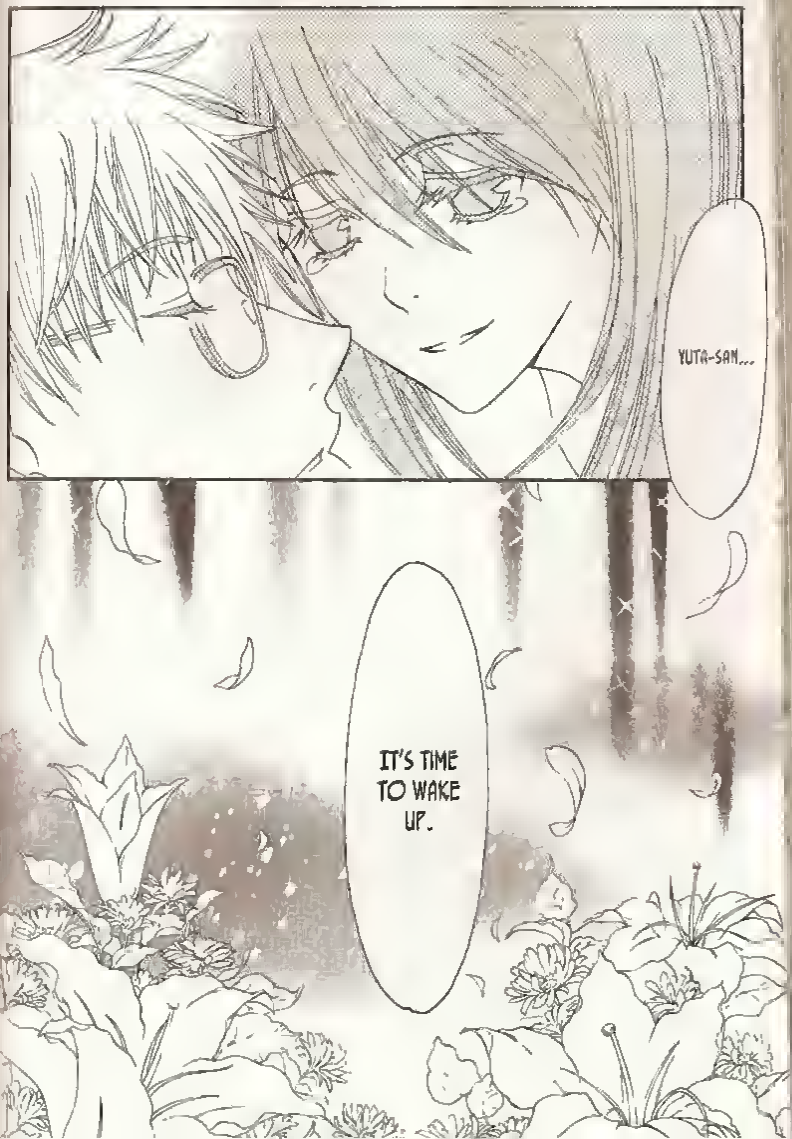
"I LOVE YOU KOTOKO."
..RESPONDED TO TAKUTO-SAN'S EMOTIONS.
TWITCH
?

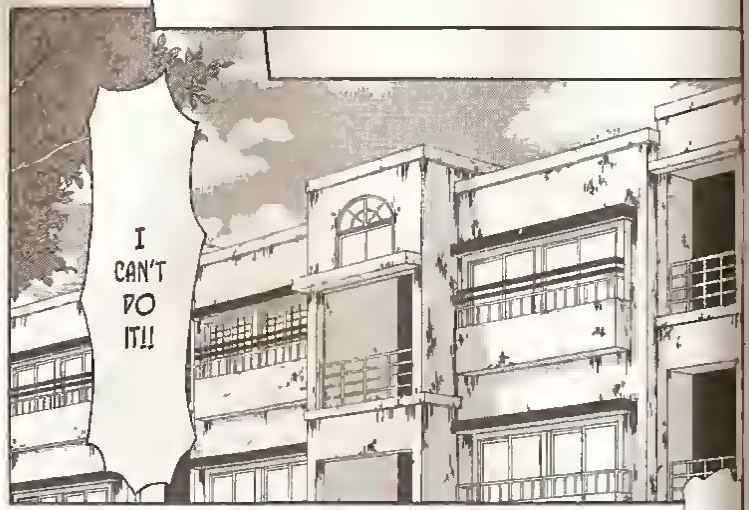
TAKUTO-SAN!!
SQUEEZE
YUTA-SAN'S ENCROACHER?!
COULD THAT BE THE ENCROACHER FULLY DEVELOPED?!

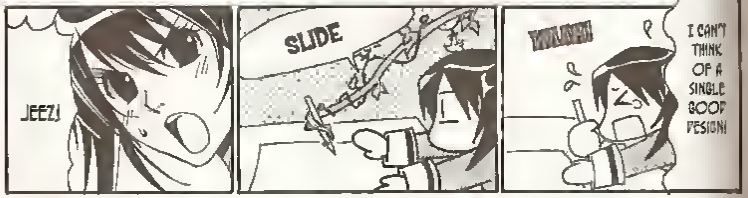
THE ENCROACHER ...!
AH...


...SLEEPING BEAUTY...
...IS ALWAYS AWAKENED BY HER PRINCE CHARMING.

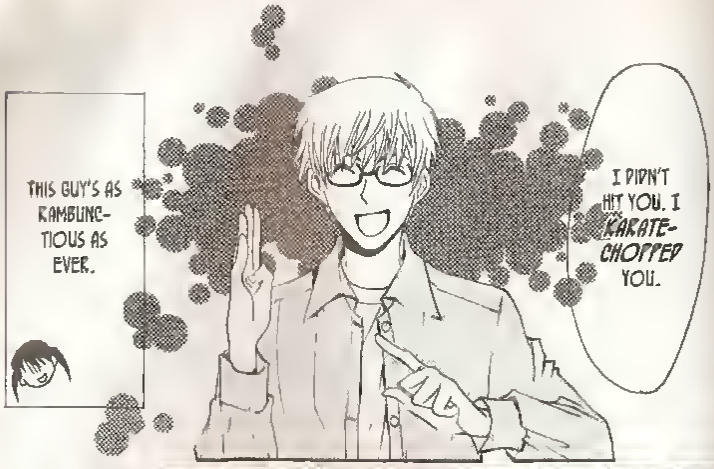

!
AS THE FAIRY TALE GOES...


YUTA-SAN...
IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP.

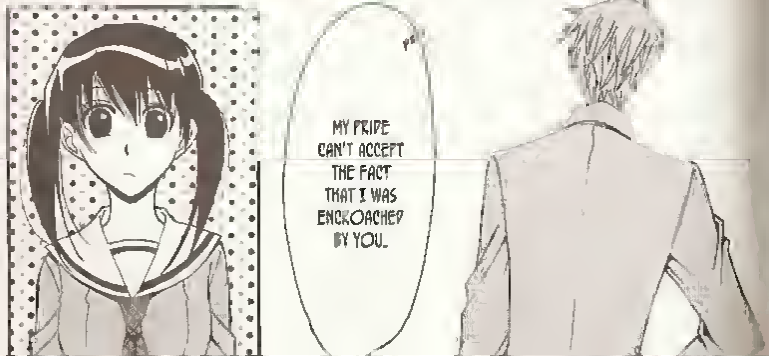

I CAN'T DO IT!!

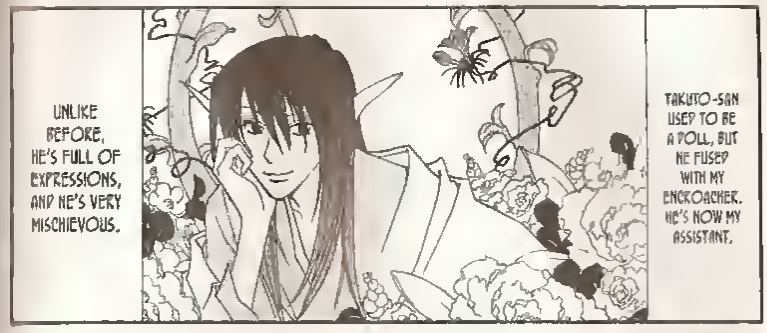

JEEZ!
SLIDE
YUUSHI
I CAN'T THINK OF A SINGLE GOOD REASON!

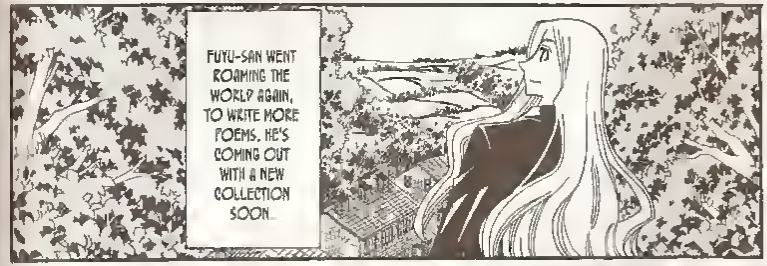
I'M STILL MAKING DOLLS AT FOOL ROO.
And he's still way better than me
DON'T SNEAK UP ON ME, TAKUTO-SAN!

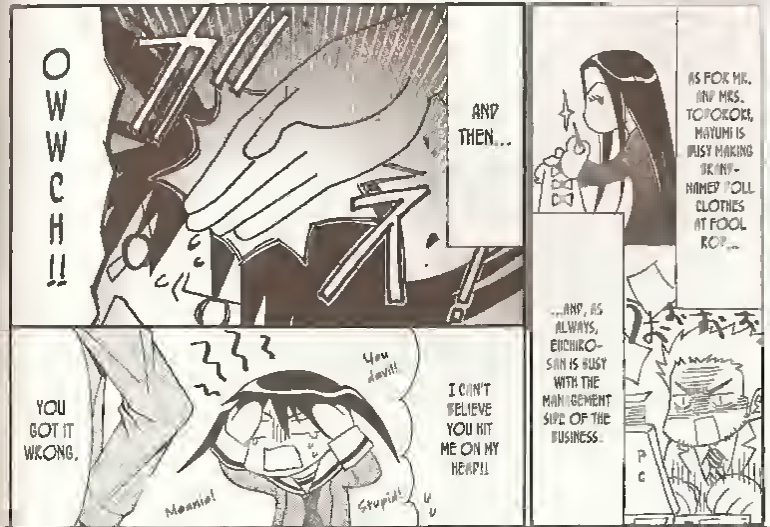

THIS GUY'S AS RAMBUNC-TIOUS AS EVER.
I DIDN'T HIT YOU. I KARATE-CHOPPED YOU.

WHAT'S WITH YOUR ATTITUDE?!
I KNOW IT WOULDN'T SUIT TO SPOIL YOU--
FINE WAY TO TREAT YOUR SAVIOR. DO YOU KNOW ALL I WENT THROUGH TO GET YOU BACK?
Shoosh!


MY PRIDE CAN'T ACCEPT THE FACT THAT I WAS ENCROACHED BY YOU.


UNLIKE BEFORE, HE'S FULL OF EXPRESSIONS, AND HE'S VERY MISCHIEVOUS.
TAKUTO-SAN USED TO BE A DOLL, BUT HE FUSED WITH MY ENCROACHER. HE'S NOW MY ASSISTANT.


FUYU-SAN WENT ROAMING THE WORLD AGAIN, TO WRITE MORE POEMS. HE'S COMING OUT WITH A NEW COLLECTION SOON.

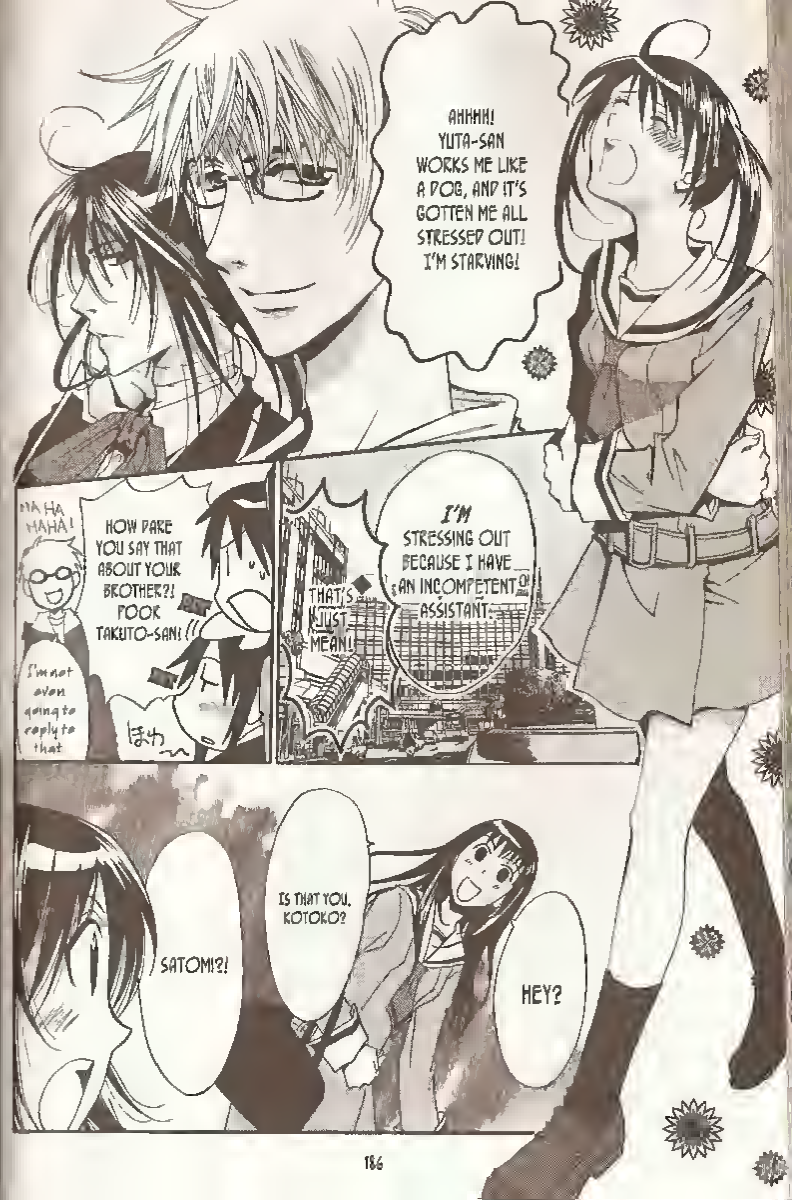

OWWCH!!
AND THEN...
YOU GOT IT WRONG.
You devil!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HIT ME ON MY HEAD!!
Meanie!
Stupid!
AS FOR MR. AND MRS. TOPOKOKI, MAYUMI IS BUSY MAKING SKINNY-HAIRED DOLL CLOTHES AT FOOL ROP...
...AND, AS ALWAYS, ENCHIRO-SAN IS BUSY WITH THE MANAGEMENT SIDE OF THE BUSINESS.
P C

extra

HEY...
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
A NEW FUTURE AND A WHOLE NEW WORLD LIES AHEAD OF US.
JUST "THANKS" FOR PUTTING ME BACK INTO GEAR WITH TIME.

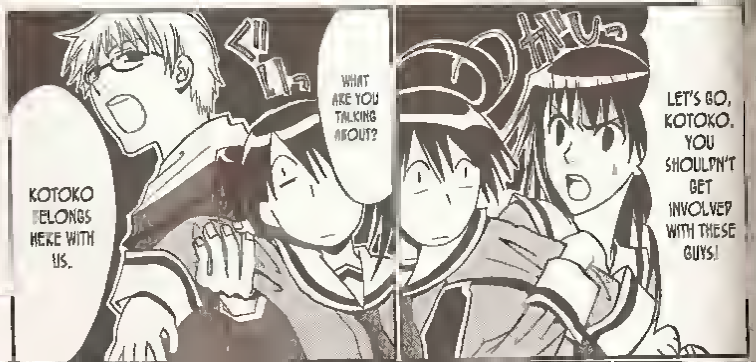
End

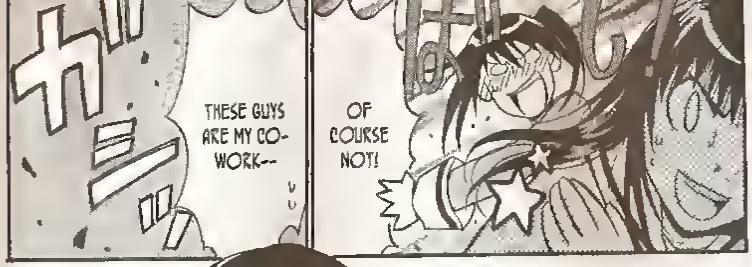
THOSE TWO GUYS REALLY ARE HOT. OH FOR CRISSAKE
COME TO THINK OF IT...
OH, THIS IS MY CLASSMATE, SATOMI.
AND?
KO-TOKO!
YOU HANG AROUND WITH SOME HOT GUYS.
LOOK AT ALL THE ATTENTION THEY'RE GETTING
WHAT ?!!
ARE THEY BOTH YOUR BOYFRIENDS?

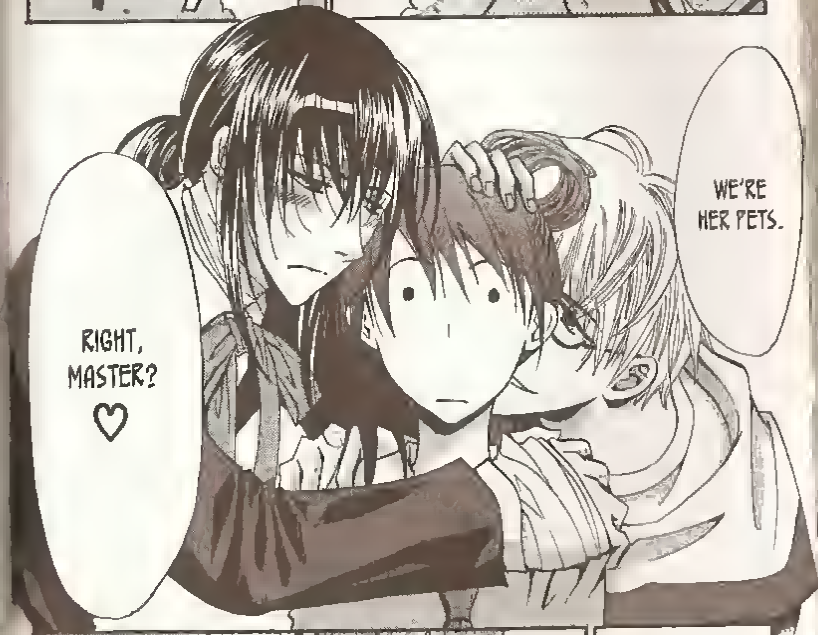

AHHHH! YUTA-SAN WORKS ME LIKE A DOG, AND IT'S GOTTEN ME ALL STRESSED OUT! I'M STARVING!
I'M STRESSING OUT BECAUSE I HAVE AN INCOMPETENT ASSISTANT.
THAT'S JUST MEAN!
HA HA HAHA!
HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT ABOUT YOUR BROTHER?! FOOK TAKUTO-SAN!!!
I'm not even going to reply to that
ほわ
SATOMI?!
IS THAT YOU, KOTOKO?
HEY?

YOU PERVS!
YOU CAN'T TOY AROUND WITH A GIRL'S FEELINGS!!

AND WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?!!
KOTOKO ISN'T FIT TO BE ANYONE'S MASTER!
BESIDES!
UM...
Boy, what a mouth

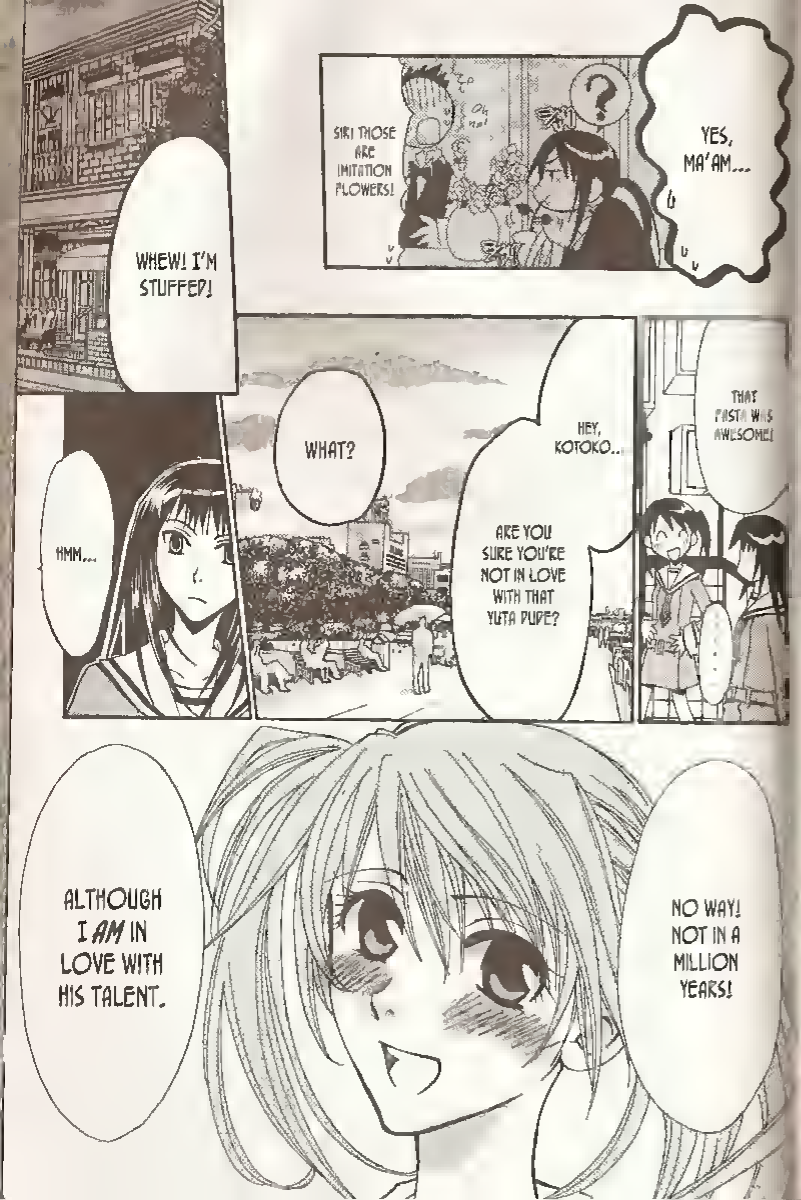

KOTOKO BELONGS HERE WITH US.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
LET'S GO, KOTOKO. YOU SHOULDN'T GET INVOLVED WITH THESE GUYS!


THESE GUYS ARE MY CO-WORK--
OF COURSE NOT!


WE'RE HER PETS.
RIGHT, MASTER? ♡

Kya!
QUIT IT! THAT'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET ALL EMBARRASSED ABOUT IT ..
GYAAAAA...

ARE YOU TWO LISTENING?!
RIGHT BACK AT YOU.
I'M REALLY HUNGRY, YOU GUYS...
Hmph
IMPRESSIVE.
WHAT...
...IS GOING ON?
FLORIST
SIR, PLEASE DON'T EAT OUR FLOWERS.
HA HA! I DON'T THINK...
LET ME WARN YOU. THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN WIN
ALL THE MORE EMBARRASSING WHEN I DO BEAT YOU!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE ENJOYING THIS!!
LET'S DO THIS ALREADY!!
HEY! LISTEN TO ME!!
I'M HUNGRY!!
YOU GOT IT!
OKAY...SO KOTOKO GOES WITH THE ONE WHO WINS THE MOST GAMES.


WHEW! I'M STUFFED!
SIR! THOSE ARE IMITATION FLOWERS!
Oh, no!
YES, MA'AM...
HMM...
WHAT?
HEY, KOTOKO..
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT IN LOVE WITH THAT YUTA PUPE?
THAT PASTA WAS AWESOME!
ALTHOUGH I AM IN LOVE WITH HIS TALENT.
NO WAY! NOT IN A MILLION YEARS!

DING DING DING
MAXIMUM SCORE
I WIN!
NOW LISTEN TO ME!

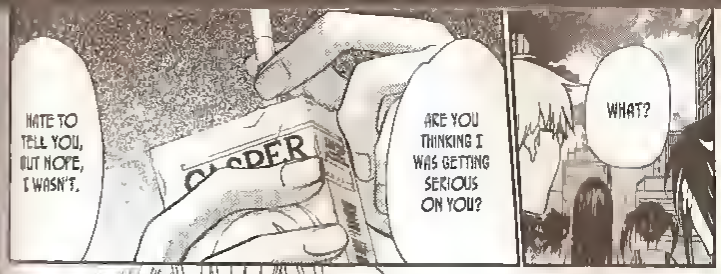
THANK YOU FOR PURCHASING SHINSHOKU KISS VOLUME TWO!
LONG TIME, NO SEE, EVERYONE. THIS IS KAZUKO HIGASHIYAMA.

WELL, A LOT OF THINGS HAPPENED (ALL MY FAULT), BUT I HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THIS SERIES. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED ME, AND TO ALL THOSE WHO READ MY BOOK!

THIS SERIES WAS MY STAB AT MY NOT-SO FAVORITE "GIRL AS THE MAIN CHARACTER WITH MONOLOGUES" GENRE. HOWEVER, I WANTED TO CHALLENGE MYSELF, AND I LEARNED A LOT FROM THIS EXPERIENCE. I'M FOREVER IN DEBT TO MY EDITOR. I ALSO HAVE TO ADMIT THAT DRAWING KOTOKO-CHAN'S COSTUMES WAS A LOT OF FUN. I'M A FAN OF GOTH AND LOLITA-STYLE CLOTHING, BUT SINCE I DON'T LOOK SO GOOD IN THEM, I HAD KOTOKO-CHAN WEAR THE COOL OUTFITS FOR ME.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH TO ALL THOSE WHO READ THIS FROM BEGINNING TO END!!

KAZUKO HIGASHIYAMA



BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED BY SOMETHING BEING THE LAST TO KNOW...

Extra End